

REMINISCENCES
OF
ISAAC MARSDEN.

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ISAAC MARSDEN.

REMINISCENCES
OF
ISAAC MARSDEN,
OF DONCASTER,

BY
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'PICTURE-TRUTHS,' ETC.

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P R E F A C E.

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WHEN I heard of the death of Mr. Isaac Marsden, I felt that the Church of Christ had lost a faithful and devoted servant, and I had lost a personal friend.

I resolved that he should not go down to the grave ‘unwept, unhonoured, and unsung ;’ so I wrote a series of papers describing my own impressions of him, sketching a few interesting features of his work, and giving a few examples of his marvellous success.

These papers were published in the *Watchman* and the *Methodist Recorder*, and were widely read, and received with lively satisfaction. The editor of the *Christian Miscellany* wrote to ask me to supply him with three papers on the same subject; and old friends of Mr. Marsden wrote to me from all parts of the country, asking me to supply further information.

I found it to be the opinion of all his friends that for the good of the Church, and for the glory of God, some

permanent record of his life should be made. I was pressed on all sides to write his biography; and seeing in the work such a sphere of usefulness as seldom comes in a man's lifetime, I resolved to make the attempt.

I have found it a more formidable task than I anticipated, owing to the condition in which he left his manuscripts. He could not have expected that his biography would ever be written, or he would surely have left some reliable documents. But his lack of service has been made up by the generous help of his friends and admirers in various parts of the country.

My warmest thanks are due to the members of his own family, his relatives and friends, who have cheerfully furnished me with information, and permitted me to copy valuable letters and verify important statements. My only regret is that so many ministers and laymen who have written to me have imposed on me the conditions of withholding their names, and the names of places, as the parties indicated in the narrative are still alive.

I have tried to make the book a trustworthy record of his life and work. Many persons now living can vouch for the truth of the statements I have made, extraordinary and improbable as they may appear. I have satisfied myself as to the accuracy of my statements; and if they are ever questioned, I shall be prepared to prove them.

My task will have failed in its aim if the perusal of this book does not rouse my readers to a high and holy purpose in life. The great need of the world to-day is a host of men who will seek the Lord as Isaac Marsden sought Him, and then serve Him as he served Him.

JOHN TAYLOR.

29, BANKS STREET, BLACKPOOL,

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REMINISCENCES

OF THE LATE

ISAAC MARSDEN.

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CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

A CENTURY ago the steam giant was unknown among the valleys and hill-sides of Yorkshire, and it was only here and there that the splash of a waterwheel could be heard. Occasionally some shrewd observant man would think it worth his while to dam up the mountain torrent and erect a small waterwheel, to grind his corn, or save the labour of his horses and servants ; but, as a rule, all the labour was performed by human hands, and machinery was almost unknown.

For ages the manufacture of flannels and woollen cloths had been conducted in the most primitive fashion. The wool had been combed, dyed, spun and woven in the cottages and farm-houses of the district. It was literally home-spun.

A stranger passing through any village in South Yorkshire at that time would have heard the click and rattle of hand-loom weaving in almost every cottage. Usually a large bedroom, and a corresponding room on the ground floor, formed the workshops for the family ; and wool in every stage of manufacture would be found on the premises. As soon as a child could mount the seat-board, and throw the shuttle, and

use the treadles, it was taught to weave. The labour was heavy for a child of ten or twelve years of age ; and it required the greatest care and attention, or the pattern would be spoiled, and the work would have to be undone and corrected. Children of tender years often worked early and late in these little hives of industry, and earned their own living when they ought to have been at school.

The village of Skelmanthorpe, about midway between Huddersfield, Wakefield, and Barnsley, was a typical Yorkshire manufacturing village at that time. Every farmhouse and cottage had some kind of rude machinery or contrivance for the manufacture of woollen cloth. It was the fashion in those days to wear fancy waistcoats of every hue and colour. The ‘swell’ of the period would appear on Sundays with a vest as gay as a peacock’s tail, and as gorgeous as a rainbow. The poor farm-labourer, who could not afford a fancy cloth waistcoat, would have a calf’s skin dressed, with the hair cleaned and dyed at home, and would rival his rich neighbour in the startling colours on his vest.

Ladies’ fancy dress goods were also very popular about the beginning of the present century ; and Skelmanthorpe became famous for the quality, texture, and colour of its fancy cloths. William Marsden, and Ann his wife, lived in a cottage in the village, and earned a comfortable living by hand-loom weaving. It was an occupation requiring close application, constant care and attention, and affording few opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment. For some time, during their early married life, they were blessed with health and prosperity. During one severe winter, however, he worked early and late in the damp dull loom-house, among fogs and chills which brought on a severe attack of rheumatic fever. For weeks his life was in danger ; and when he was able once more to enjoy the sunshine and breathe the pure air, he became painfully conscious that his career as a hand-loom weaver must come to an end. The dull damp confinement of the loom-house rendered him liable to successive attacks of rheumatism, and a change of employment became absolutely necessary.

He had a small family growing up, and though he had a

stirring, active wife, who made the most of her opportunities, it soon became clear that he must do something to keep the wolf from the door. It occurred to him that if he could buy wool direct from the farmer, and employ others to manufacture it under his supervision and care, and sell the cloth to the tailors and woollendrapers himself, he might earn a comfortable living without exposing himself to his old enemy the rheumatic fever.

He talked the matter over with his wife ; and as they were both well acquainted with all the processes of manufacture known at the time, they thought they could do all the work themselves for some little time. His long illness had seriously reduced their little stock of money ; and when he had obtained the primitive machinery that was absolutely necessary for the work, he had only enough left to purchase a stone of wool. It was a small beginning, but it was as much as he could afford to pay for. He hated debt, and nobody would give him long credit ; so he took no more than his scanty pence would buy. The stone of wool was combed, dyed, spun, and woven, mainly by his own hands, and the cloth was sold at a fair profit. By rigid self-denial and unceasing toil this process was repeated again and again, till William Marsden took his place among the small manufacturers of the district. He was a pushing, upright, honest man, and in the course of a few years gained the confidence of his customers, and the esteem of his neighbours.

During these early struggles for existence, ISAAC MARSDEN was born at Skelmanthorpe, on June 3rd, 1807. He was the third child of William and Ann Marsden. Their first-born was a daughter, who lived to a ripe old age. The second was a boy, who died in infancy ; so that the hero of our story was the eldest surviving son. There were ten children born into the family, of whom six survived.

The home was a scene of ceaseless activity ; for it required all the talents and energies of the parents to keep out of debt and make their way in the world. They worked early and late, and often the father would return late at night or early in the morning from the market where he had sold his cloth

and bought his wool. There were few luxuries to be had ; for the family might be thankful if they could secure abundance of plain wholesome food, and be clothed in simple home-spun materials.

In childhood Isaac was fond of home life. He would sit for hours at his mother's feet, playing with a shuttle, or a bobbin, or a simple toy, and seemed to have no desire for the company of other children about his own age.

As he grew older, he was sent to school for such education as the rural schools of that period could afford. His mornings and evenings were occupied with any little task that he could perform, or he was sent on errands to relieve his father's more pressing duties. At school he learned to read, and soon acquired a passion for reading that could not easily be satisfied. He would neglect the most important duties at home, and incur his father's wrath and displeasure, to gratify his love of reading. If he could obtain a newspaper or a book, he became unconscious of the flight of time, and oblivious of everything around him, till his father brought him to his senses by a liberal application of the birch-rod or the horse-whip. This over-mastering passion seemed to retard his studies in other subjects. He learned to write after a fashion, so that he could make out and read his own writing ; but those who did not understand his peculiarities would be puzzled to decipher his meaning. His spelling was bad, and many a severe flogging did he receive for his careless and incoherent epistles. He made fair progress in arithmetic, as it was important he should be able to keep accounts and make calculations for business purposes. But beyond this he did not proceed far with his studies at school. He knew nothing of grammar, geography, or history, and his only chance of increasing his stock of information was his passion for reading.

At considerable personal inconvenience and self-denial his father kept him at school, hoping that he would receive such an education as would repay him in after years. But as his progress was so unsatisfactory, and the companionships and friendships he formed so undesirable, he was taken from school at twelve or thirteen years of age, and was sent by his father

into the loom-house to learn the art of weaving. He had been familiar from childhood with the hand-looms, and his father thought he would soon become a competent and trustworthy weaver. But he was doomed to disappointment.

Isaac would take his place on the seat-board, and press down the treadles with his feet, and make a shed, and send the shuttle through. He would throw the slay-board backward and forward, and sing and whistle like a lark. But alas for the web that he produced ! It would be as stiff as a board, and as unlike the pattern as a careless boy could make it. The broad stripes were narrow, and the narrow stripes were broad. He would take the colours in the wrong order, and mix them so hopelessly that the oldest weaver in the village could not undo the mischief. The stripes that ought to have been regular and even, were broken and varied, till the cloth was utterly ruined and wasted. It was not that he was a lazy boy, but the loom was too strait and confining for him. He had not patience to count every pick of the shuttle with the regularity of clockwork, and he made mistakes so often that it became impossible to unpick and mend his spoiled work. For his irregular stripes his father gave him a severe flogging ; but no amount of punishment could ever make him a weaver, and he soon left the loom in disgrace.

That he might know when cloth was properly dressed, he was taught the art of ‘cropping.’ The old method of cropping by hand has been completely revolutionised by modern machinery. He managed the old-fashioned cropping tolerably well, but it was the only part of the manufacture of cloth in which he showed any proficiency. He continued at this employment till he was sixteen or seventeen years of age.

During his school life and early working years his habits completely changed. Home lost all its charms, and he formed companionships that seriously affected his character.

In his childhood he had been the subject of deep religious impressions. There was no church in the village. The Wesleyan Methodists and the Primitives had small chapels there, but these were so far away from his home that the family seldom attended any place of worship. His mother had

always had a reverence for God's house, and a desire for His service; and it was a great grief to her that the claims of her children, and the distance of her home from any sanctuary, deprived her of the means of grace. She gathered a few friends and neighbours to her house for religious worship, and a class-meeting was formed that met regularly in her kitchen.

About this time a gracious revival of religion was experienced in the neighbourhood. The Primitives and Wesleyans provoked each other to holy rivalry and activity. Camp meetings, preaching services, cottage prayer-meetings, and house-to-house visitations were followed by such an outpouring of the Spirit as Skelmanthorpe had never seen. Ann Marsden was wonderfully blessed during these services, and became a woman of great power with God.

At some of these services Isaac was powerfully affected. Among children of his own age, who were similarly influenced by the Spirit of God, he used to reproduce the services, and preach in his own way the terrors of the law. He showed what was in him at that early age by thundering hell and damnation in their ears, and frightening some of them by his terrible sermons. If he had made a confidant of his mother and told her his desires after God at that time, it is highly probable he would have been converted and saved from years of sin and sorrow.

But these influences soon passed away. His father had no love for religion, and regarded Isaac's attendance at the week-night service with as much aversion as his inordinate love of reading. In any case, if his duties were neglected, it mattered not whether he had been reading trash or saying his prayers, he was sure to have a round with the horse-whip when his father had time to attend to him. This stern and rigorous discipline did him no good. It simply aggravated the mischief it was intended to cure.

Isaac had now reached the most critical period of his youth. He was sixteen years of age, healthy and strong, full of frolic and mischief, high-spirited and reckless. He was tossed hither and thither on a stormy sea of passion at the mercy of wind and waves.

The village green during the feast week at Skelmanthorpe was a scene of wild confusion. The public-houses were crowded with drunken revellers, who caroused all day, and made night hideous with their quarrels and disturbances. A stout stake was fixed in the middle of the green for bull-baiting and bear-baiting. Here some unhappy bear was chained, with only liberty to move round the pole, and sit on his hind-legs. Savage bull-dogs were incited to attack him, and as they pinned him by the nose, and made him yell with pain, the excited crowd screamed with delight. If the bear caught the dog in his paws and crushed the life out of it, he became the hero of the hour, and was removed from the stake for a brief respite by his tormentors. Then a fine powerful bull would be chained to the stake by the nose, with only sufficient length of chain to enable him to defend himself. The dogs were set upon him, and if he was a tame, spiritless creature, who allowed himself to be torn and worried, the spectators gloated over his sufferings, and thought it served him right. But if he became furious, and tossed the dogs like shuttlecocks with his horns, and broke away from the stake to wreak his vengeance on the crowd around him, they were wild with admiration, and said he deserved a better fate. Occasionally a ring was formed, and two savage bull-dogs were incited to attack each other. They would fight with blind fury till one of them was worried, when the crowd would adjourn to the public-house to settle their betting accounts, and devise new forms of amusement. Often two powerful young men would strip and enter the ring for a brutal prize-fight or a match of wrestling. There were no policemen in those days, and the constables, who ought to have put down such disgraceful proceedings, contrived to be out of the way when they were wanted.

Among these scenes of revelry would be mountebanks, and showmen, and fortune-telling Gipsies, and vagabonds, and thieves, from every quarter. The din, and uproar, and strife lasted night and day. Work was entirely suspended for a week, and often the savings of a whole year would be spent in folly and sin.

To the everlasting credit of the Methodists it must be said that they did not allow these scenes of riot to be perpetrated in their presence without protest. They assembled in the streets, and went through the village singing hymns, praying, and warning sinners of their guilt and danger. They conducted special services in their chapels, and did their utmost to gain the ears and hearts of the giddy multitude. Sometimes they suffered persecution for their zeal, and often the preacher's voice would be drowned by the clanging of cymbals and the beating of drums. But they were content if they could satisfy themselves that the devil did not get all his own way.

This wild, stirring scene on the village green at the feast was but a faint type of the conflicting passions and motives in Isaac's soul at that time. His gay companions were sorely in need of a leader. His reckless, headstrong passions, and open, generous nature, fitted him for such a position. He could coerce the strong and beguile the weak. He seemed to them a born leader, and if he had only ambition enough, he might be their king. His father's stern, rigorous discipline went too far, or not far enough. It was not discriminating and wise. So long as he did his duty faithfully, and performed his allotted task, no questions were asked. He might keep late hours or bad company, or read bad books, but, if he attended strictly to business, his father would be satisfied. The least departure from the father's iron rule, or the slightest neglect of duty, brought him under the lash, and he would smart for many a day.

His mother ardently longed for his conversion. In her own heart and life the power of the Gospel was felt and seen. He could never look steadily into her mild blue eyes without a twinge of conscience or a pang of remorse. He knew he was not what he ought to be. Her life was his highest ideal of life. To be as pure and good as his mother would be the height of ambition.

So that in these conflicting elements—companions, father, and mother—he had sin, law, and Gospel in competition for his heart. He was swayed like the leaves of a forest tree by every wind that blew. He was starting on the voyage of life;

and if Christ took the helm, he would be saved. If the devil took the helm, he would be ruined.

In after life he often regretted that no good Christian took him in hand at that time and led him to Christ. It was a golden opportunity, but nobody saw it ; so he was left to the whirlwind of passion, and everybody but his mother abandoned him to the way of transgressors.

CHAPTER II.

SOWING WILD OATS.

WILLIAM MARSDEN's business continued to prosper. He paid his accounts punctually. He gave his customers the full value for their money. He treated his workpeople fairly and kindly. He was a living exposition of the truth : ‘The hand of the diligent maketh rich.’

As the produce from his looms increased, it became necessary to find new markets. He opened accounts with wholesale houses in Lincolnshire, and it became necessary to attend the principal fairs and markets in that neighbourhood. There were no railways, and the carriers’ carts were not always to be trusted to deliver his goods as promptly and speedily as he desired. So he purchased a valuable horse and light cart, that he might serve his customers personally.

He hired a room in the yard of the ‘Wellington Inn’ at Doncaster, as a warehouse and dépôt for his Lincolnshire customers. He engaged a bedroom for his own separate use when travelling in the neighbourhood. Thus he had virtually two homes—a permanent one at Skelmanthorpe, and a temporary one at Doncaster.

In these long journeys he took Isaac as his assistant. The lad took kindly to his new employment, and showed signs of becoming a good salesman. He booked orders, and kept accounts, and measured cloth, and made up parcels so cheerfully, that his father decided to remove him from the workshop and take him regularly to market. Isaac’s new employment was exactly to his taste, and he did his best to please his father in every respect.

Before he was seventeen years of age, he had so far gained

his father's confidence that he was trusted on some of these journeys alone, and placed in charge of the warehouse at Doncaster occasionally. This arrangement was doubtless very convenient for business purposes, but it was a source of danger to Isaac's character. His time was divided between Skelmanthorpe and Doncaster. When he was at one place, his father was at the other ; and as his father never troubled him so long as he attended to his business, he had many opportunities of getting into mischief. A strong, healthy, well-fed youth, with strong passions, fierce temptations, plenty of pocket-money, and no parental restraint, he soon began sowing wild oats. His duties required him to attend certain well-known public-houses, in order to meet his father's customers. Thus he soon learned to drink, and to mix with the idle, dissolute characters who haunted the kitchen and tap-room. He was free and open-handed with his pocket-money, and often treated every drunkard in the room. So that he soon became exceedingly popular among the ignorant and degraded.

He had an innate love for practical joking. He would play his prank regardless of consequences ; and if he got into trouble with his Doncaster friends, he would stay at Skelmanthorpe till the storm had blown over. But he would soon get into disgrace there, and find it necessary to seek safer quarters.

One of his companions was a youth named Jack Senior, and his name figures in many a wild prank. These two worthies went into the kitchen of the 'Wellington' one night, and fomented some dispute, and set the men quarrelling and fighting. They upset the long table, hurled pots and pipes and glasses to the floor, and thrust the uplifted end of the table through the ceiling. Then they overturned the long settle, and sent the quarrelsome drunkards sprawling on the sanded floor. The landlady, hearing the uproar, ran to the rescue of her pots and glasses ; and when order had been restored, she declared it was 'one of Isaac Marsden's tricks.' But Isaac and Jack knew they had made the kitchen of the 'Wellington' too hot for them for some time ; so they kept out of the way till the incident was almost forgotten. The next time they appeared on the scene, they made peace by treating all round.

There was a good deal of method in their mischief. A cross-grained, cynical old man in Skelmanthorpe used to say that 'Ike Marsden and Jack Senior were born to be hanged, and would surely come to the gallows some of these days.' They were bad enough, no doubt, but unfortunately his rasping, snarling denunciations made them no better. As he persistently denounced them both in season and out of season, they gave him many opportunities of losing his temper. One morning, his front door could not be opened, and he had to go out by the back door to see what was the matter. A stray donkey had been turned into his garden, and tied up so tightly to his front door that he had to cut the rope before he could release it. The donkey, to show its resentment at such treatment, broke away from the old man, and did some serious mischief among his choicest plants and flowers. There was not the slightest evidence to prove that these two youths had turned the donkey into his garden or tied the door, but it was set down to their account, and the old man firmly believed they were the guilty parties.

The house stood in its own garden, and was some distance from any other house. The old man lived alone and was very superstitious. One night he was rudely disturbed in his slumbers by some unearthly sounds. Jack and Isaac had a large paving-stone each, and were vigorously rubbing them up and down the wall of the old man's house. Those who have never heard that operation performed on a large stone house at the witching hour of night can have no idea of its effect on sensitive nerves. The old man thought his hour had come. His hair almost stood on end with fright, and the cold perspiration stood in bead-drops on his brow. He covered his face with the bed-clothes, prayed loudly for mercy, and promised to be a better man if the good Lord would only spare him this time. Next day he told his neighbours some remarkable stories about the supernatural noises he had heard, but for once he failed to blame the real offenders.

It is but fair to say that his father knew little of these wild adventures. Isaac's attention to his father's business was outwardly satisfactory. He would make any sacrifices or undergo

any hardships to keep a business appointment. He had been repaying somebody at Doncaster a real or fancied wrong, and had narrowly escaped getting into serious trouble in consequence. The whole day had been spent with his companions in folly and sin, and as night came on he remembered that he had promised to be at Huddersfield market next morning with a particular piece of cloth. His father would drive over from Skelmanthorpe to meet him, and he knew there would be a sound horsewhipping in store for him if he failed to appear at the appointed time. He wrapped up the piece of cloth in a convenient parcel, put it on his shoulder, and started to walk to Huddersfield. All through that long dark night he walked, and very early in the morning he caught the coach at Shelley, a few miles from Huddersfield, and rode into the town. A brush, and a wash, and a breakfast followed ; and when business began, he was as active and lively as if he had spent the whole night in peaceful slumber.

This lack of parental restraint explains many of the wild excesses of Isaac's youth. He was so full of animal vigour and strength that his powers of endurance were practically unlimited. He could spend night after night in folly and sin, and yet be strong and active enough to discharge his daily duties to his father's satisfaction.

His mother often spoke to him about his wild reckless life, but her words seemed to him as an idle tale. Once he went with his companions to bathe in the river Don. They dared each other to attempt the most reckless and foolhardy feats. Isaac, as usual, was first and foremost in these deeds of daring, till he was caught by the current and swept away. He sank like a stone in a bend of the river where the water ran like a mill-race. Fortunately help was at hand, and after a most exciting search he was found and brought to the surface by his friends. They laid him on the grass and pronounced life to be extinct, but some sanguine neighbour resolved to try the usual means of restoration. After long and persistent efforts, he began to breathe naturally ; but he was many days before he recovered from the effects of his immersion.

This adventure was used by his mother as a powerful argu-

ment in favour of the claims of religion. She pointed out his guilt and danger, and affectionately urged him to make his peace with God. He listened with respect, and for a few days remembered her words ; but he soon went back to his old companions and habits, and became as wild and reckless as ever.

One night, when driving home in the dark, he had to cross the canal by a swing-bridge. He felt sure he could find the bridge and drive over safely, but the horse suddenly stopped and refused to go another step. He dismounted and groped about, but, failing to find the bridge, he retraced his steps to the nearest house and fetched a light. The bridge had been opened to allow a boat to pass through, and had not been closed again. Another step, and horse and cart would have been plunged into deep water ; but the faithful horse refused to move when he found himself on the brink of the canal. Isaac replaced the bridge, crossed it in safety, and reached home made more sober and serious by his midnight adventure.

Again his life had been spared, and again his mother warned him of his guilt and danger. For a few days he behaved more circumspectly, but his goodness, like the early cloud and morning dew, soon vanished away.

Another cause of mischief was the wonderful authority he had over his companions. He had a physical superiority by reason of his robust health and enormous strength. When he was about twenty-one years of age, his strength was prodigious. He was tall, muscular, athletic, and full of daring aggressiveness that led him into many a quarrel. One day, as he drove up to the ‘ Red Bear Hotel ’ at Thorne, the landlady met him at the door, saying : ‘ O Mr. Marsden, what shall I do ? A gang of navvies are quarrelling and fighting in the kitchen, and breaking and destroying everything.’ ‘ Take care of my horse,’ said he, ‘ and I’ll soon shift them.’ There was not a constable to be found, and he was alone among a host of frenzied, drunken ruffians ; but he elbowed his way into the kitchen, and singled out the ringleader. Seizing him by the throat, he shook him as a terrier would shake a rat. Then he took his victim to the door, and deliberately threw him across the street. Going back into the kitchen, he picked out the

leading rioters one by one, and disposed of them in the same way, till the house was cleared.

It may seem strange they did not retaliate and attack him, but that was much easier said than done. His arms were so long that he could reach and punish any ordinary man, while his opponent could not touch him. And he had a habit of squeezing his foes so effectually that when they once felt his iron grip, they would take care to avoid one of his ponderous blows.

It is clear therefore that his extraordinary strength and unbridled passion gave him great authority over his companions. He was recognised as king, and allowed to have matters his own way. He gained an evil reputation among those who were the chief sufferers by his recklessness; but he never bore any malice or ill-will towards them, and they soon forgave him.

But he had an intellectual as well as a physical superiority. Most of his companions were men who read little, and were unable to discuss and contend with him. He had access to the newspapers of the time, and carefully read and remembered the great speeches made during the Chartist agitation and the political excitement preceding the Reform Bill of 1832. He was well acquainted with the questions that stirred the hearts of the people during that period, and his sympathies were on the popular side. After the business of the day he would go to the bar-parlour or kitchen of the inn where he stayed, and, with his pipe and glass and boon-companions, talk till midnight of the speeches he had read or the opinions he had formed.

In those days good books were scarce and dear. The Christian Church had not awoke to the value of pure literature; and as Isaac could not read good books, he read bad ones. He carefully studied Paine's *Age of Reason*, Mirabeau's *System of Nature*, and every tract and pamphlet issued from the infidel press of that period. He adopted their opinions, and used their arguments to excuse, if not to defend, his own wickedness. Thus he learned to sneer at virtue, and ridicule religion, and hold up good men to scorn and derision. Nothing

pleased his companions better than a pot-house discussion on religion or politics, especially when he could find a foeman worthy of his steel; but he was so dogmatic and contentious that few dared to contradict him. If he failed to find a formidable opponent to argue with him, he would vary the evening's performance by ridiculing religion and playing practical jokes on all who did not endorse his opinions.

His inveterate love of reading often brought him into conflict with his father. It was not because he read bad books, but because he read at the wrong time. Often on his long journeys he would hold the reins in one hand and a book in the other, as he drove over the rough country roads. The horse would stumble, the reins would be slack, and down it would come, breaking its knees or the shafts. Even when riding on horseback, he would read, till the horse fell and sent him flying over its head. It is said that he never drove a horse at that time without breaking its knees.

These acts of carelessness irritated his father and led to unpleasantness between them. They agreed so long as he attended strictly to business, and promoted his father's interests in every possible way. They only quarrelled when he was negligent and inattentive.

He became a first-rate salesman, and pushed business to his father's satisfaction. At the various fairs and markets of South Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire he became well known as a shrewd, keen, observant young man, who could drive as good a bargain as most men, and who could sell as much cloth as his father could manufacture.

There seemed to be two Isaac Marsdens: one, the pushing, energetic, obliging salesman who executed orders, and collected accounts, and extended his father's business; and the other, the wild, reckless, daring young libertine whose hand was against every man, and who was the ringleader of every madcap frolic and wild adventure.

From seventeen to twenty-seven years of age he led this double life. It was his boast that he 'feared neither God nor man nor devil.' His days were spent in hard work, and his nights in folly and sin.

In his later years he looked back with sorrow and shame to those terrible ten years in which he ‘sowed his wild oats.’ He understood the significance of the Psalmist’s prayer: ‘Remember not the sins of my youth.’ The sins might be forgiven, but the mischief could never be undone. The seeds he sowed yielded a harvest of shame and sorrow.

CHAPTER III.

THE DAWN OF A BETTER DAY.

THROUGH all these weary years of sin and folly there was only one person in the world who had any influence over him for good. He had cast off every other bond that saved him from drifting to shipwreck and ruin, but his love for his mother. Her love was the sheet-anchor that held him fast. Her piety secretly charmed him, and she could touch a chord in his heart that was beyond the reach of all the world beside.

Every day she prayed, ‘Lord, save my Isaac. He is beyond the reach of every other arm but Thine.’ This was the burden of her prayer, morning, noon, and night. With intense earnestness and unwearied perseverance and mighty faith, she prayed when the case seemed most hopeless and desperate. She knew she was asking for a miracle of mercy; for Isaac’s conversion seemed the most unlikely thing in the world. He was the devil’s mighty champion and faithful servant, and, humanly speaking, as far from salvation as any man in the world. His pious relatives and friends had all abandoned him to a career of vice and folly, and regarded all efforts to reclaim him as absolutely hopeless. But she never gave him up. The more wild and lawless and wicked he became, the more persistently and powerfully did she pray for him. In her agony and distress one night she forgot all about the flight of time. Her husband was far from home, and the children were in bed, and Isaac was away in some scene of folly and sin; so she pleaded with God all night for his conversion.

About four o’clock in the morning a sudden conviction filled her mind that her prayer was answered, and Isaac would be saved. She knew not how, nor when, nor by what means this

unlikely event would be realised. She could not reason about it satisfactorily, but she felt sure that God would save her Isaac. She quoted the lines :

‘ Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone ;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, “ It shall be done ! ” ’

Filled with this blessed assurance, she determined to work night and day to reclaim him, and watch for the signs of any change in his conduct, and pray incessantly, ‘ Lord, save my Isaac.’ She had need of all her faith and courage and perseverance, for he became worse each week in his conduct. He was not only more wild and wayward than ever, but he was always inventing new forms of wickedness, and new modes of enjoyment for his wicked companions.

One of his favourite amusements at his tap-room entertainments was reproducing the speeches he had read, or the sermons he had heard, for the delectation of his companions. This was a never-ending source of pleasure to them, and helped to strengthen his own memory and improve his powers as a speaker. If he had been content to reproduce what he had heard or read literally, there might not have been much harm in the performance ; but he took care to parody sacred things, and hold religious subjects up to ridicule and contempt. Amid shouts of laughter and rounds of applause, he would imitate the peculiarities of the preacher he had heard, and present the sermon the most grotesque side out, thus wielding a most pernicious influence over his companions.

One Sunday in the autumn of 1834, the Rev. Robert Aitken was announced to preach special sermons in the new Wesleyan Chapel, Priory Place, Doncaster. He resolved to go and hear that popular preacher, in order that he might compare him with others whom he had heard, and pick as much fun out of the service as possible.

The preacher was a ‘ son of thunder,’ and with ‘ thoughts that breathed and words that burned’ he fell upon Isaac and utterly routed him. He seemed to be preaching to nobody else ; and

if he had had the gift of prophecy, he could not have known more of Isaac's mental condition, or more fitly met his case. The outlines of the sermon were lost in the bold, dashing, fearless onslaught he made on Isaac's conscience. Looking him full in the face, he denounced his sins with such directness and power that Isaac felt his courage was melting away. Then he thundered the terrors of the Lord in his ears, till Isaac began to tremble. The Spirit of God accompanied the word, and impressed the truth on his conscience so mightily that he could not resist. He had never met his match before, but he was now decidedly beaten. He could neither argue against what he had heard, nor successfully resist the appeals of the preacher. He was dumb, and knew not what to say. He had had a new experience that day which he could not explain or understand. For the last ten years he had been carefully building up a refuge of lies that should be his stronghold and defence. But the preacher had opened fire upon his stronghold, and with a few well-directed shots had reduced it to ruins, and left him naked and exposed as a sinner—a sorry spectacle for angels and men and devils. What should he do?

After the service he remained at the prayer-meeting, and his presence there caused no little commotion among his relatives and friends. One or two of them spoke to him, but he could give no satisfactory account of himself. He could only tell them that the preacher had been hitting him very hard, and he never had the truth put to him so plainly and powerfully before. He felt he was a sinner and needed mercy, but beyond that he declined to commit himself. He was persuaded to go into the inquiry-room, and kneel among the penitents ; but a kind of intellectual paralysis seized him, for he 'thought nothing and felt nothing' beyond the immediate effects of that sermon. He was 'sore wounded by the Spirit's sword,' but he did not at once begin to seek earnestly for mercy.

The influence of Mr. Aitken's sermon was abiding. It was a nail fastened in a sure place. Go where he would, and do what he would, for the next few weeks, it haunted him every moment like a terrible nightmare. He could not get away from it, and he could not shake it off, and he could not argue

against it. Nothing had ever so completely baffled and beaten him before, and time only seemed to increase its power over him. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that the preacher was right and he was in the wrong.

So many versions of the visit of the Rev. R. Aitken to Doncaster have been given, and so many different statements have been made by persons who trust only to their memories, or to the impressions made on their minds by what they have heard, that I think it right to publish the testimony of an eye-witness :—

‘SPRING BROOK, ONTARIO, CANADA,
June 27th, 1880.

‘DEAR BROTHER,—I have great pleasure in sending you a reminiscence of our late Brother Marsden, which may help you in giving a correct account of the circumstances under which he was converted.

‘At the request of the Rev. R. Aitken I accompanied him from York to the Wolds, Scarborough, Hull, Gainsborough, Doncaster, and Sheffield.

‘At Doncaster the Missionary Anniversary sermons were preached by Mr. Aitken in the afternoon and evening. He laboured hard for an hour trying to impress the congregation in the afternoon, but, as he told me afterwards, “the word seemed to rebound back to his own bosom.” At last he shook himself and roared like a lion, and said: “I have long heard that Doncaster was the capital of the devil’s kingdom, but now I believe it.”

‘Yet under that sermon Isaac Marsden was awokened from death to life. We knew nothing of it at the time; but I heard Brother Marsden in a love-feast at Denby Dale—the head of our native circuit—relate the story of his conversion and subsequent five years’ experience. I followed him, and gave an account of the circumstances as above stated.

‘Mr. Aitken’s appeal aroused the members of Society; yet we had no after meeting at the close of the first service, as we usually had, but the brethren went home weeping and praying. Special prayer-meetings were held in many houses till the time for evening service. Then we had a glorious time; many precious souls were born again, the late Rev. W. B. Thorneloe being one of them.

‘Our dear Brother Marsden was the honoured instrument in the conversion of my youngest sister in the chapel of our native village, Cawthorne.

‘As I have many numbers of the *Methodist Recorder* sent to me, I saw your *Reminiscences*, and hope this information will be in time to be of service to you.—Yours truly in the Lord Jesus Christ,

‘BENJAMIN PASHLEY.’

Very shortly after this remarkable sermon he spent a Sunday at Skelmanthorpe ; and as there was to be a love-feast at the Wesleyan chapel, he resolved to go and find some amusement out of it. He would take down the names of all the speakers and the substance of their remarks, that he might parody the service, and make fun of the speakers, when he spent a night with his companions. Accordingly he took his pocket-book and pencil, and secured a back seat, where he could see and hear everything. He wrote down the name of each speaker, with just sufficient of the testimony to enable him to remember it.

These pious people had what they called ‘a good time,’ and they kept his pencil very busy. His neighbours and friends told how the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ made them happy, and strong, and powerful for good. His own mother told how the Lord had blessed her home, and cheered her heart, and how the burden of her prayer was that God would ‘save her Isaac.’

One after another these simple statements were made, till he had a long list of names written down, and a number of facts recorded that sorely perplexed him.

His conscience arrested him with this problem :

‘Isaac, you have known these people all your life. In sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, they have been true to their principles. Some of them have endured persecution for Christ’s sake, and yet they have honourably maintained their profession. You never knew any of them do a mean, shabby, dishonest deed. They never told you a lie or tried to deceive you in their lives. Are they lying now ? or are they speaking the truth ? If they are speaking the truth, you are on the wrong side of the hedge.’

Quick as a flash of sunlight, this reasoning revealed to him the hollowness of his infidel notions, and the worthlessness of his sceptical arguments. He saw he could not argue against such facts, and it would be useless to try to shake their testimony. His proud intellect was confessedly beaten once more. He felt that he had no excuse for his wicked life and mischievous teachings. He folded up his pocket-book, and put

away his pencil, and sprang to his feet. In a few brief sentences he told them how he had heard first one and then another tell how the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ made them happy, and strong, and powerful for good. He was not happy, but he had made up his mind that if there was a heaven, he would gain it ; and if there was a hell, he would miss it. Then, bringing down his hand on the pew door before him like a sledge-hammer, he finished his remarks by saying, ‘And if ever I do get converted, the devil may look out.’

These remarks produced a great impression on his friends at Skelmanthorpe. They knew not how to receive them. If they received them seriously, they might indulge hopes that would be disappointed. If they took them as another of his jokes, it was time he ceased to joke with such solemn questions. When they learned, however, that he had attended the prayer-meeting at Doncaster on the previous Sunday, and gone willingly into the inquiry-room there, they began to think that he was really in earnest.

He was now in a state of transition, and he candidly admitted that he had brought matters to a serious crisis. By his visit to the inquiry-room at Doncaster, and his remarks at the love-feast at Skelmanthorpe, he had taken the first step towards reformation. He regarded these public acts as pledges and promises solemnly binding upon him, and he felt the time had come when he must break away from his old companions and habits. With his mouth he had made confession, but he had not yet ‘with the heart believed unto righteousness.’

He went one day into the ‘Wellington Inn,’ and told the landlady ‘he was going to turn over a new leaf.’ She told him she would believe it when she saw it. He told her she *would* see it, for he had fully made up his mind about it.

About this time a love-feast was held at Doncaster, at which he said, ‘It will be a bad day for the devil when Isaac Marsden is converted.’

It is important to bear these public utterances in mind, as indicating the importance he attached to such things in later years. I have heard him say, the devil knew it was a very serious matter when he went to the penitent form in the

inquiry-room, and when he spoke at the love-feast. These things indicated a change of mind and of purpose, but as yet he had not been born again.

Fortunately he fell into the company of a few friends at Doncaster who gave him most valuable help and counsel at this critical period. A young convert, named John J. Butler, who was employed as a tailor, and who had been ‘meeting in band’ for some time, induced him to attend all the means of grace, both public and private, and took him into his confidence and gave him the benefit of his experience. Another person who took a great interest in him was ‘friend Naylor,’ brother of the Rev. William Naylor, a holy man, of mild and gentle spirit, who gave him wise counsel and valuable help. Another was ‘friend Unsworth,’ a shoemaker, of a meek and quiet spirit, and a holy man of God. But perhaps he received most help from ‘friend Waring,’ an old man famous for his piety and wisdom.

These men of God made Isaac their special care, and never allowed him to escape from their influence. They took him to class-meeting, prayer-meeting, band-meeting, love-feast, and preaching services, and to their own homes, for instruction and counsel and encouragement. They led him as a poor broken-hearted penitent to the Saviour, and urged him to seek for mercy.

‘Friend Waring’ went to visit him in his rooms at the ‘Wellington Inn,’ and found he had a library of infidel books that had cost him from ten to twenty pounds. He pointed out that the writings of Paine, Voltaire, and Mirabeau had done incalculable harm to the cause of Christ, and had supplied Isaac with arguments and information that helped to bring religion into contempt. How could he ask the Lord to receive him with these unclean and mischievous things in his hands?

They talked the matter over, and prayed about it, till Isaac resolved that all his bad books should be destroyed. They carried them downstairs into the brew-house in the yard, and consigned them, one by one, to the brew-house fire. But this mode of destruction was too slow; so they made a bonfire of them, and when the last book had been burned to tinder he

walked into the house, saying to himself: ‘There, they will never do anybody else the harm they have done me.’

From this time, in penitence and prayer, he diligently sought for mercy. It was not an easy matter with him. He had sinned so flagrantly against the clearest light and knowledge, that it was necessary to give him a wholesome dread of sin, and make him as sensitive as a burnt child that dreads the fire. There was a conflict in his soul which he never forgot to his dying day, and that left its mark on all his future life. Again and again I find him saying, ‘What a devil I have been! Will the Lord save such a guilty wretch?’ And often in bitter anguish he would exclaim: ‘Woe! woe to the devil if ever I get converted!’

This terrible struggle lasted for some days, and it is impossible to describe the mental anguish and sorrow he endured. His sins were arrayed against him in all their heinousness and wantonness. But he was wonderfully helped by his kind friends at Doncaster, who gave him most valuable advice, sympathy, and aid.

The crisis was reached on Sunday morning, October 11th, 1834, when he resolved to give God no rest till his prayers were answered and his sins forgiven. He attended the six o'clock prayer-meeting that morning, asked his friends to pray for him every hour of the day, and told them privately that he ‘meant business.’ He believed it was his privilege to walk in the light of God's favour, and be made happy in His love, and he would win his privileges or he would die. And that day deliverance came. He attended all the public means of grace, but it was in his room, during the interval of service, that his prayers were answered. It was while he was alone, on his knees, offering himself as a poor captive exile to God, and pleading for mercy, that his soul was set at liberty.

His testimony was clear and undoubted. He felt that God had for Christ's sake pardoned all his sins. His experience at that moment was:

‘Not a cloud doth arise
To darken the skies,
Or hide for one moment my Lord from mine eyes.’

He speaks of this time years afterwards as ‘the ever-memorable day—a day I trust I shall look back to with delight when I have been ten thousand years in glory—when I first began in earnest to seek the Lord. Blessed be God, I sought Him not in vain. I sought till I found Him. I then went on seeking God with greater earnestness than ever, until I was enabled to lay claim to the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.’

One of his first acts was to go home and tell his mother. There were several people in the house at the time, but he made no secret of his new experience. He had served the devil publicly, and he had no desire to serve the Lord privately; so he told them all that his sins were forgiven, and now he had begun to serve God. His mother turned pale and almost fainted on hearing the news. He asked a neighbour to pray with him, and they all knelt together to return thanks for his conversion. His sister knelt beside him, listening attentively for some faint sigh or responsive ‘amen.’ She had not long to wait, for he soon gave a response that startled them all, and made the house ring again.

He carried the good news personally to friends Butler, Unsworth, Waring, Naylor, and all who had any sympathy with him, or love for the cause of Christ. He went many miles to inform his brother-in-law, the Rev. E. Tyas, and ask an interest in his prayers. He showed his gratitude on many occasions to those holy men who had given him such wise counsel and timely help during those days of darkness before his conversion.

The genuineness of his conversion was shown at once by its fruits. When he told his mother of this marvellous change, she was somewhat doubtful and sceptical, but his changed conduct soon satisfied her that the work was of God, and was no mere fleeting impression or religious excitement.

His social instincts had been remarkably strong. He had never spent a night at home for years, and it seemed as though life would be intolerable to him without the stimulating excitement of his wild companions. Now he loved to be alone with his Bible and his meditations. He retired to some quiet room,

where he could study the Scriptures, and meditate, and pray for hours together without interruption. Occasionally he sought one of his spiritual advisers for religious instruction and counsel and help; but when he had gained the information he desired, he would return to the peace and quietness of his own little sanctuary.

His conversation had been rough and unrestrained. He had neglected to keep control over his thoughts and his tongue, and his language had often been wicked, and sometimes even blasphemous. Now his words were more careful and guarded. As a straw will show which way the wind blows, or indicate the direction of the current, so even the little acts of his life proved the thoroughness of his change. Shortly after his conversion, he had been making up a parcel in the warehouse at Doncaster, and talking to his younger brother, when he suddenly sprang to his feet, and brought his head into violent contact with a cupboard door that he had carelessly left open. It was a blow that gave him a great shock and caused much pain. He rubbed the wounded spot with his hand, and danced about the room, saying to himself: ‘Bless the Lord! if I had not been converted, that would have made me swear!’ This incident was a source of great amusement to his brother at time, but it convinced him that Isaac’s conversion was a radical change, and not a mere profession.

His intellectual studies had been most mischievous and unsatisfactory. He was an omnivorous reader, and had devoured all the books that came in his way. Now he was a man of one book. He read nothing but his Bible, and that book had such a charm for him that he cared for no other.

In all these respects his conduct for a few days after his conversion was so different from what it had been before, that it thoroughly confirmed his professions. His life was so completely changed that it was evident he had become ‘a new creature.’ Old things had passed away, and all things had become new.

CHAPTER IV.

OUT AND OUT.

THE story of Isaac Marsden's conversion spread like wild-fire. The country people heard the news at the fairs and markets, and carried it home to the remotest villages and hamlets in South Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire.

His old companions received the story with screams of laughter and rounds of applause, and they repeated it as a good joke. They said he was only getting a closer insight into the secrets of the Methodists, and the next time he came round with his cart he would bring a choice stock of new jokes and spicy stories for their amusement. Nothing could induce them to treat the subject seriously ; they knew Isaac too well.

The general public received the news with suspicion and reserve. They hoped for the best, but they evidently thought it was too good to be true. They would suspend their judgment, and wait till they saw and heard him for themselves. They had no faith in these sudden conversions, and did not see how a wild, reckless sinner could be suddenly transformed into a saint. That kind of thing might be good enough for the Methodists, but they would not trust any new convert, and put no faith in religious excitement.

Even those Christian friends who had been working and praying for his conversion talked about it with bated breath and ominous references to the future. Staunch friends like Waring and Unsworth told him that the devil would not part with him without many a struggle. He had gained one glorious victory, after a desperate struggle ; but the enemy of his soul would attack him again and again, and he would surely

fall, unless he continued to watch and pray and fight. His only safety lay in vigilance and aggressiveness.

Thus his conversion became the theme of general conversation; it was discussed as eagerly as political questions are canvassed during a general election. Not only did the religious public talk about it, but the pot-house orators discussed it in bar-parlours and kitchens, till they quarrelled and fought over this extraordinary subject. Isaac was so well known as a notorious infidel and profligate, that his conversion created a profound impression, and set men thinking and talking about religion who had never thought about it before.

The one question on everybody's lips was, 'How will he behave himself?' He will come with his cart at the usual time, and collect his accounts, and receive orders, and deliver goods; but what difference will his conversion make? Will he smoke and drink, and put up at public-houses, and mix with his old companions? Or will he be a Christian 'out and out?'

Isaac was in a very humble and child-like frame of mind. He had lost all the bounce and pride that he had a few weeks ago. He declared he had been 'the chief of sinners,' and his conversion was a miracle of grace. He knew he had fierce passions and a strong will, and he was terribly afraid that in some unguarded moment he might be led into sin by the enemy. He believed there was no safety for him in moderation and quietness. He must be vigilant and aggressive. He must either be where the battle raged hottest, or he might become a deserter and a traitor. The one overmastering question with him was: 'How shall I maintain my loyalty to Christ, and my zeal for His glory?'

His answer was: 'By being a Christian "out and out." His friends advised him that by taking up a bold and aggressive position in the Church, and by carrying the war into the enemy's camp, he might be saved from many fierce temptations, and be better able to stand in the day of trial. Hence he resolved that there should never be any doubt about his position in the future. The Church and the world, angels, and men, and devils, should know on whose side he fought.'

He had led scores to sin and sorrow, but he would lead hundreds, if not thousands, to Christ. His motto should be, ‘Out and out.’

Looking back half a century, we can see the wisdom of the choice he made, and we can admire the heroic efforts he put forth to reach and save his fellow-men. He had been no ordinary sinner. He was not a fifty-pence debtor, but one that owed to his Lord more than he could ever pay. His rescue from a life of sin was such a manifestation of infinite power and love that he could only look on it with amazement, and exclaim :

‘O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be !’

And his own example had led so many to ruin that he felt constrained to spend his life in seeking to rescue them. So that he had not only a debt of gratitude to repay, but a life of mischief to undo ; and these thoughts led him to declare that he would be a Christian ‘out and out.’

Let us illustrate this principle by a reference to his private and public life at the commencement of his Christian career.

In his private life his Christian friends set before him a high standard of experience. Friends Naylor, Unsworth, Waring, and Butler were holy men. They enjoyed the blessing of entire sanctification or perfect love. They believed in it, and preached it, and enforced it on him. They told him he could never have the power of learning, or culture, or wealth, or social position ; but he might have the power of goodness.

They kept him to all the means of grace, both public and private, so far as his business would permit. They met him at six o’clock on Monday morning for an hour’s fellowship, communion, and prayer, before he began the duties of the week. Then they agreed to pray for each other seven times a day till they met again ; and whenever he returned, they visited his house to ascertain how his soul prospered.

He formed a habit of spreading his Bible open on a chair in his room, kneeling down beside it and carefully reading it. He usually began with Genesis, Job, and Matthew, and read

consecutively and methodically morning and night without fail, and often at noon. He not only read, but compared scripture with scripture, and used the best commentaries he could find, and prayed often that God would make him a diligent and successful student of His Word. In this way he soon became mighty in the Scriptures, and had his mind well stored with saving truth.

The young convert also acquired the habit of ejaculatory prayer. He tried to carry out the injunction, ‘Pray without ceasing,’ and I am inclined to think he did it literally. For, if a prayer were not on his tongue, it would be always on his mind and in his heart. He prayed for years seven times a day, though no one knew it but the Master, and one or two privileged friends who were in his confidence and who prayed for him.

In all this attendance on the means of grace, and private prayer, and meditation on the Scriptures, there was a child-like simplicity and godly sincerity that we are bound to admire. He never paraded his piety before the world. He had not a particle of the Pharisee about him. His motives were pure, and he sought only the glory of God, and the prosperity of his own soul, and the salvation of those around him.

His friends often induced him to make individual and mutual covenants with God. To these written covenants they solemnly signed their names, and sometimes had them attested by witnesses. I have found several of these covenants, duly signed and witnessed and dated. In several cases he solemnly covenants with a tempted brother to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquor and tobacco for a year, or some other limited period ; and his friend signs with him, and solemnly promises to observe the same conditions.

Regularly on Saturday evening, after business hours, he used to put away his books and papers, lock the door, read a portion of Scripture, and solemnly renew his covenant with God after this fashion :

‘I give myself away without reserve to Thee. Bow Thy heavens, O God, and help me both in temporal and spiritual things, in body and soul, by night and by day, eating and drinking, selling and buying, preaching

and praying, every day, every hour, every minute, every second, every breath to be Thine. Plunge me deeper and deeper still each day this week into Thy precious blood, and make and keep me clean.

‘Each day I am Thine. Save me. Amen.

‘This covenant I now sign this Saturday night (time half-past eleven), and commit my all to Thee.

‘So help me God. Amen.

(Signed) ‘ISAAC MARSDEN.’

These covenants were made only for a short period, that they might be renewed with great solemnity and impressiveness. Sometimes he would write down the days of the week, and the duties of each day, and at the end of each day’s record he would write: ‘I am Thine, Lord, save me. Amen.’

By severe mental discipline and self-denial he gained the victory over his passions and lusts, and grew in piety and power. Still he had not attained to that perfect love which his brethren enjoyed, and they gave him no rest. At the six o’clock Monday morning band meeting, before he left home, and on the Saturday evening, after he returned, and all day on Sunday, they were preaching holiness to him. In season and out of season, they urged him to fulfil the Divine command: ‘Be ye holy: for I am holy.’ It was not, however, till about sixteen months after his conversion that he entered into the privileges of the higher life. Writing in February, 1836, on this subject, he says:

‘I first dared to give God my whole heart, and believed that the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed me from *all* sin. This happened at a place called Langworth, at the inn where I put up—Mr. Talbot’s. Before I lay down to rest, I made a practice of reading a portion of Scripture on my knees, and I did the same in the morning. In this way I had read twice and a half through the Bible; and as I got to prayer, this passage came into my mind: “My son, give Me thine heart.” And I said to God: “Here, Lord, Thou shalt have it,” believing that a God so pure and holy would not keep sin in His hand. And, blessed be God! I still feel that the blood cleanses me from all sin. O my God, may this ever be my experience!’

It is a remarkable fact that, from the day of his conversion to the day of his death, he never lost the sense of God’s

favour ; and the high state of Christian experience he reached in 1836 was maintained to the end. In his private life and Christian experience he was a Christian ‘out and out.’

And it is equally true of his public life and Christian work.

Immediately after his conversion, he went to the ‘Wellington Inn,’ the scene of many of his wildest pranks ; and finding a number of his old companions there, he told them of his conversion, and invited them to follow his example. He warned them that if they would not go with him to heaven, he would take care he did not go with them to hell. He solemnly admonished them that he had done with them for ever, unless they repented. Then he knelt on the sanded floor, and fervently prayed for their conversion. The landlady told him he had lost his senses, and some of his comrades ridiculed him ; but he went again and again, and, with tears in his eyes and anguish in his soul, he tried to save them. Three of his companions were either killed, or carried away by swift and fatal disease, and they died in their sins. Their sudden deaths made a great impression on him. He regarded himself as morally guilty of contributing to their ruin by his precept and example. He had been a ringleader in the devil’s army, and his recklessness had been infectious. It was now a terrible revelation to him that it is much easier to lead men to ruin than to bring them to Christ. Some of his old companions threw his former deeds in his teeth, and laughed him to scorn. But he faithfully warned them, and continually prayed for them, until some of them yielded themselves to Christ, and became his spiritual children.

His ready wit and merry humour often gave point and pungency to his remarks. On his long journeys he was compelled to make use of public-houses, and associate with men who had no love for the Gospel. On these occasions he set a good example of Christian temperance. Instead of calling for spirits or beer, as had been his custom, he would call for a glass of water, and pay the same price for it as for beer. As he sat drinking his water, he would tell the company of the doings of John Barleycorn in his neighbourhood. He would show how drink makes men quarrelsome, foolish, and miserable.

He would tell of broken chairs, and crazy tables, and cracked pots, and suffering wives, and pining children ; thus making a Temperance speech before Bands of Hope and Temperance Societies were established. Often he would kneel down and ask God to save some poor drunkard, while the landlord looked on in mute astonishment.

Driving on the highroad, he would scatter tracts, and stop to have a few words of religious conversation with strangers. Passing through Tealby, near Market Rasen, he found two men by the road-side breaking stones on a stone-heap. He told them he had heard of a stone harder to break than any they ever saw. Some people had been hammering at it for more than sixty years, and they had not broken it yet. He had had a blow or two at it, but he could make no impression on it, and he believed it grew harder each year. The stone-breakers were wonderfully interested. They said they never heard of such a stone. They should like to have a blow or two at it, for they were sure they could break it. Then he told them it was neither limestone, flint, nor granite, but an old sinner's heart ; and nothing but the mighty power of God could move such a heart. Then he knelt down by the side of the stone-heap, and earnestly prayed that God would take away the hearts of stone from these men, and give them hearts of flesh. Then he mounted his trap, and drove away ; but one of the stone-breakers became a child of God through that singular conversation.

On another occasion, two farm-labourers were cleaning out a filthy drain as he passed. He stopped and told them of a filthier spot than that sewer—one that all their skill and experience would never enable them to cleanse and purify. They said that was bad enough, and they had no desire to see a worse. Then he told them of the foul impurities of the unregenerate heart, and urged them there and then to seek the cleansing blood of Christ, and be made new creatures. They listened with astonishment and respect, and he finished his exhortation by kneeling on the grass close by, and praying for them.

During the race week at Doncaster he found many oppor-

tunities of reproving sin and making known the Saviour. He joined a few young friends in placarding the trees and walls and gateposts with texts of Scripture giving warnings and invitations to sinners. He joined the giddy multitude, and scattered tracts, and spoke some home truths to the surging, reckless mob, that made them respect him, if they did not follow his advice.

He visited the sick and needy, and diligently sought out opportunities of doing good. Many a poor old saint has had a friendly visit from him, when a chapter has been read, and a prayer offered, and a half-crown piece has changed owners. He had been open-handed and generous in treating the drunken and dissolute, before his conversion, and he did not think that religion should make him mean and stingy. He resolved that he would give away more than he had ever done, but his money should be invested where it would bring him good interest. So he helped to dry the mourner's tears, and cheer lonely hearts, and feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and follow the example of the blessed Christ, Who, when He was on earth, 'went about doing good.'

Thus, in works of mercy and charity, and by personal service and self-denial in seeking to win men to Christ, he proved the genuineness of his conversion.

Everywhere and at all times he reproved sinners, and warned them of their guilt and danger. He made the most of his opportunities, and was instant in season and out of season.

Often, after he had sold his cloth in the market-place, his cart became his pulpit, and the market people his congregation, and he would stand bare-headed and without coat, warning sinners and inviting them to the Saviour. The people would gather round, and spend a few minutes listening to his rough and home-spun language. He had a ready wit and a fluent tongue; and though he had now begun to fear God, he never was afraid of either man or devil. He sometimes met with rudeness and insolence; but if any man tried to silence him, or put him down, he found it a formidable task. These street harangues were signally owned of God in the conversion of sinners of the worst kind. Men and women who never went

to any place of worship were reached and rescued in this way. Combative, argumentative infidels were met and silenced when they entered into discussion with him.

'And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.'

If his language was not always polished and polite, it was always pungent and practical, and, judged by results, highly encouraging.

His success in this kind of evangelistic work, where so many try and so few succeed, indicated where his strength lay, and he resolved to make himself an efficient workman. For this purpose he read and studied, and prepared such matter as would catch the popular ear and gain the attention of the people.

He went chiefly to the scenes of his former folly and sin and devoted most of his time and attention to the rescue and salvation of those whom he had previously led into mischief. This required great courage and patience, but he was wonderfully successful. The feast Sunday after his conversion was a memorable day to him. He spent the day at Skelmanthorpe and as soon as the amusements began, he took his stand between the two public-houses, and began preaching to his old companions. They chaffed him, offered him beer, and spirits and tobacco, and reminded him of his former excesses. Then they cursed, and abused, and insulted him, and tried to make him lose his temper. It was fortunate for them that he was able to possess his soul in patience. He was as strong as a horse; and if he had permitted himself to attack them in anger, he would have beaten some of them within an inch of their lives. But he bore their insults meekly; and when he was reviled, he reviled not again. Grace triumphed, and the open-air service was owned and blessed of God to the conversion of a few of his old friends.

Thus he laid the foundation of his future career, and showed to the Church and the world what was in him. While he laboured diligently and successfully, he kept his heart right with God, and the flame of his piety at a white heat. By his outward conduct and his private devotions he showed that he was a Christian 'out and out.'

CHAPTER V.

CALLED TO PREACH.

TOWARDS the latter end of the year 1836, Brother Waring mentioned Mr. Marsden's name at the Local Preachers' Meeting, and he was invited to go out as an exhorter in the Doncaster Circuit. In considering his case, they discussed his conversion and religious experience, his character, abilities, and acquaintance with Methodist doctrines.

There could be no question about his conversion, for that was as manifest as the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Those who had known him all his life bore testimony to the reality of the change in his conduct, and the reformation in his character.

As to his abilities and fitness for the work, they pointed out how he had already distinguished himself by rescuing some of his old companions, and introducing them to the Church. Some of the most notorious sinners in the circuit had become his spiritual children, and were now living holy and useful lives. If it were asked what he could do, they pointed to what he had done.

The only question that caused any doubt was his acquaintance with Methodist theology, and the extent of his reading on religious subjects. But this was soon settled by his voracious appetite for reading; and by the vote of the meeting he was called to preach.

As a matter of fact, he began to preach the day he was converted. He never allowed sin to appear in his presence and go away unreproved. He never forgot to warn sinners of their guilt and danger, and invite them to the Saviour. He became

a successful preacher and was the means of saving some within a week of his conversion.

While his name was yet in a Methodist class-book ‘on trial,’ he had been the means of saving scores by his earnest appeals and faithful warnings. Before the Church on earth recognised him even as a member, the great Head of the Church recognised him and used him in His service. Thus he became an apostle, ‘not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.’ His call to preach came from head-quarters, and the rank and file of the Church were slow to recognise it. He had been preaching successfully for two years in the streets and markets, the public-houses, and the haunts of sin, before he was called to preach by his brethren.

It was some time before he took kindly to our orthodox notions of behaviour in the pulpit. He could never be induced to submit to any written or unwritten form of service. He would break many of the rules of propriety, and scatter to the winds everything that limited his freedom of action. He would pray sometimes till he frightened the people, and made their hair almost stand on end, and sent a thrill and shudder throughout the congregation. He would preach till the people fainted, or left the chapel in disgust, or came in deep distress to the penitent form and cried for mercy. In one way or another he was sure to move them, and make his mark upon them. They would either love him or hate him, help him or hinder him, follow him or leave him. They would make their choice, and act decisively; for they could not be neutrals.

He seemed to forget himself occasionally, and would take off his coat and preach in his shirt sleeves, as he had often done in the market-place. The stern silence and severe decorum of some congregations seemed to distress him, and he would publicly thank God for a fervent ‘Amen’ or a loud ‘Hallelujah.’ He could bear noise and enthusiasm and excitement, or even opposition and persecution, but he could not bear formality and stagnation. He had his own ways of doing things, and he soon disregarded old prejudices, and ignored even the opinions of pious people when these interfered with his work. The burden on his soul was just this: ‘Men are perishing for lack of the

Gospel, and I am sent with that Gospel to every creature. Men are dying in darkness because they see not the Light of the world ; and I am sent as His herald to make Him known. If I warn them of their danger, and they reject Him, I am innocent of their blood, and their guilt and condemnation will be on their own heads. If they die in darkness at my side, and I fail to hold forth the light of the Gospel, I am their betrayer and murderer. I might have saved them, but I was too idle, or too selfish, or too proud, or too careless.' Hence the salvation of souls was a burden on his conscience, and, like one of the fiery prophets of the old dispensation, he preached and lived that Gospel, and delivered his message, whether men would accept it or reject it.

He had a firm conviction that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is an unfailing remedy for all the woes of a ruined world. He believed that it is the 'power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ;' and he would make men accept it and believe it, or they should have no peace.

In politics and religion he was a radical, in the sense that he went to the 'root' of a matter. He knew the disease that afflicted humanity, and he knew the cure. His sovereign remedy for all the vice, and crime, and profanity, and wretchedness around him was conversion. The burden of his message was : 'Ye must be born again ;' and all his thoughts, and energies, and prayers, and efforts were intended to effect this. If souls were saved, his services were successful. If there were no conversions, he went home, sad and sick at heart and distressed, to his closet ; and in an agony of prayer he asked the Lord the reason why.

At the commencement of his preaching life I find him praying :

'O may the Lord ever be with me and make me in earnest ! God is in earnest—heaven is in earnest—devils are in earnest—hell is in earnest. And in order to save my soul and them that hear me, I must be in earnest, or be in danger of being damned in the pulpit. Souls are on the verge of hell. We must be in earnest to pluck them as brands from eternal burnings. If a mother ran into the fire to save her child from

being consumed, she would be in earnest. So we must be in earnest ; we must make quick work—do it with all our might. O my God, help me ! O blessed Jesus, help me ! Holy Spirit, quicken me !'

Such a prayer as this would be followed by an address bristling with pungent home truths. He would arrest the attention by a graphic picture in words ; and while the sinner sat spell-bound, charmed, and listening with breathless attention, he would swoop down upon him with the terrible truth : 'Thou art the man.' The directness and power of his preaching made him popular from the first. He was not only called by the Master and by the officials of the Church to preach, but he was called by the masses. From the beginning of his ministry the poor people heard him gladly, and he could always command a good congregation.

He would conclude the service with a lively prayer-meeting. He would have plenty of singing, short and practical prayers, and he would insist on the use of the penitent form. He would concentrate all his efforts, and focus all his powers, for the conversion of his hearers. He would not only preach to them with terrible plainness and earnestness, but he would privately appeal to them, and compel them to submit. If they did not mean to be saved, they should keep out of his way, or they might take offence at his earnest godly efforts to reach them. He did not stand on his dignity when sinners came in his way ; and if they took offence at his plainness, he was very sorry, but he really could not help it. He had a message from God to deliver, and he would neither soften his words nor smooth his tongue, but speak the truth in love. He would go doggedly, perseveringly, his own way, and ride down all opposition, and surround himself with weeping penitents, and gather in the outcast and abandoned.

Thus he carried his motto, 'Out and out,' to the pulpit and prayer-meeting. He would have nothing common-place and ordinary. He would have no half-measures or compromises. His inflexible, unalterable determination was, '*I will save men.*' In this spirit he accepted the call to preach, and he soon became known as a 'son of thunder,' and a pioneer who prepared the

way of the Lord wherever he went. He seldom preached without making his mark ; and he was so successful that invitations came from every part of the Doncaster Circuit, and from the distant towns and villages where he transacted business.

Among the most remarkable conversions at this early period of his revival work is the following story told by a man at Wroot love-feast. He said that one Saturday night he had a dream, in which he saw the walls of Jericho standing before him strong and high, as though nothing would ever lay them low. And there came the priests of the Lord before those massive walls ; and when they blew their rams' horns and shouted, the walls of Jericho fell down flat. The man said he was familiar enough with the Bible story of the capture of Jericho, but this dream made a profound impression upon him, and he spoke to his wife about it. On the Sunday evening he thought he would take a walk and try to forget his strange dream. He knew not where to go, but was led by some mysterious providence to the Wesleyan chapel. It was not the usual preaching night, and under ordinary circumstances the chapel would have been closed, but the friends had secured the services of Mr. Marsden for a special sermon. He joined the congregation, and went with them to the chapel, thinking all the while about his dream. The text was : ‘By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.’ (Heb. xi. 30.)

The man was spell-bound as the preacher pictured the city as he had seen it in his dream—with massive walls and impregnable gates, and defended by a giant race. Then came the procession of pilgrims round the city, without battering-rams and almost unarmed, but trusting in the omnipotent strength of Jehovah. Then there was a shout, and a crash, and a dust, and a din, and above the uproar was heard the preacher’s ‘Hallelujah ! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.’ Then the preacher described the sinner’s heart as that embattled city which must be surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ. In graphic sentences he pictured the devil in possession of it, and laughing to scorn the puny efforts of a few local preachers and prayer-leaders. Then he reminded his hearers that the same

Almighty God Who had sent Joshua against proud Jericho, had sent him to preach the Gospel to them. And if the Lord sent him to summon all the unconverted hearts in that congregation to surrender, he would go in spite of men and devils. Then came a fiery, impassioned appeal to sinners to throw open the gates and welcome into their hearts their Lord and King. Among the first to respond to this appeal was the poor terror-stricken dreamer. He gave his heart to God that night, and became a faithful and devout servant of the Lord.

As illustrating the thoroughness and energy of his early missionary labours, I give a few extracts from his sermon record of that period—1837.

‘Sunday, August 6th.—I preached at Hoxey, Westwood, and Epworth. Friend Butler was with me, and it was a high day to our souls. Four or five received the blessing of sanctification, and came to the penitent bench, and humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God. I had much liberty, and the Lord backed His word with power.’

‘Wednesday, August 9th.—I preached at Amcoates, and went expecting much good; but I felt disappointed with the unbelief and backwardness that filled the place. I blamed myself in a great measure for coming to the congregation half an hour late. I felt the effects of it all through the service and some time after. O may God forgive me, and help me never to do the like again! I did not loiter my time away with company, but I spent it in private.’

‘Thursday, August 10th.—I preached at East Butterwick with great liberty, and the Lord was amongst us for good. Miss Jackson, a young woman from Barnsley, went with me to the chapel, and the Lord slew her with the sword of the Spirit. Several came to the penitent bench and were blessed.’

‘Thursday, August 24th.—At Ferry Owston in Lincolnshire I went into a class-meeting. The leader had just begun to speak to the last member. I gave an exhortation, and we had a glorious time. One of his members professed to have claimed the cleansing blood of Christ.’

‘Friday, Sept. 1st.—Praise God, I have had a glorious week. God has owned my labours.’

‘Sunday, September 17th, 1837.—Winterton. I had a working day ; I began with the six o’clock prayer-meeting in the morning. Then I led a class at eight, and gave an exhortation at the prayer-meeting at ten. At noon I visited the sick. After dinner we sang up the town, and I gave two exhortations. At two o’clock I preached, and held a prayer-meeting at the close of the service. Then I walked two miles to Winteringham, preached at six, and held a prayer-meeting at the close of the service. Penitents came for pardon, and believers for sanctification. A glorious time we had. Hallelujah to the Lamb for ever !’

‘Glentham, September 27th.—I preached here to a lively people who are zealous Christians. It is a small village, yet last winter twenty-four persons professed to receive the blessing of sanctification. One man with whom I stayed had received the blessing seven weeks after the Lord had pardoned his sins. The Lord was with us, and saved several—one an old man, and another a young woman who did not come till about ten o’clock. Several believers were sanctified. Salvation is free. O bless God for His great salvation. He can in a moment save to the uttermost.’

Writing from Thorne, Wednesday, October 11th, 1837, he says : ‘This has been a good day to my soul. It is now three years since I began to call on the name of the Lord—a day ever to be remembered by God and His holy angels, and my soul, that on Sunday, October 11th, 1834, I threw down the weapons of my rebellion and began to serve the living God. The devil himself was disappointed. I am yet living ; I am yet on my way ; I am more determined than ever, praise God. Unto Him be all the glory. The devil’s children are disappointed. They said, a few months, or a year or two, and Isaac Marsden would be back again among them. One of the devil’s children told me yesterday that he was disappointed. O may God Almighty help me to disappoint both men and devils ! Glory, I am more determined than ever ! I have been making a covenant with God for another year.’

Everywhere he preached a free, full, and present salvation. Here is a specimen of his exhortation in a prayer-meeting :

‘ We are not to wait God’s time, as some say. It is unscriptural. *Now* is God’s time. We are not to wait for power to believe. That is Calvinism. If we must wait for power, we cannot believe without it ; and consequently all that do not believe are lost because God did not give the power.

“ But if on God I dare rely,
The faith shall bring the power.”

There are hundreds that say they should like to be sanctified, and they pray for it, and they expect it some time, but they know not when. So they go on for years. O what a way of living is this ! The putting off and unbelief of a converted man is worse than the unbelief of a worldly wicked man. The wicked man hopes to be saved, but he knows not when ; and so the professing Christian regards the blessing of sanctification. There is a sort of everlasting “some time else,” instead of an everlasting *now*. It is a *now* salvation which the Bible speaks of. O may God help me, and help the reader, to believe for a *now* salvation. Glory be to God, He says : “ I am willing.” O may we take God at His word, which not only argues the perfection of faith, but the highest act of reason !

Having preached at a village where the Society was lifeless and low, he gathered the few desponding members together and prayed after this fashion : ‘ O my God, raise Thy people. O breathe upon them, and they shall revive. Lay to Thy mighty arm, and shake the prince of hell from his throne. O hasten the coming of Thy kingdom in this place.’ Then he gave them a stirring address, in which he said :

‘ Mr. Bramwell lamented to see the blessing of sanctification on the decline. O my God, Thou knowest the reason. May not this be one reason, that the preachers themselves—or very many of them—do not live in the possession of it ? Local preachers swarm by hundreds who have not this blessing. The work of God does not revive because souls are not expected to be saved, and they do not expect believers to be sanctified. O my God, sanctify every one of these ambassadors, that they may preach as for their last time. Give them to see the evil of sin as they can bear it, and to know the wretchedness of

mankind without salvation. O for the mind that is in Christ, that could weep tears of blood for sinners, and think no task too great for their salvation—no, not death itself! Another reason is that leaders have not the blessing of sanctification; they rarely speak about it; and numbers of them are strangers to it. What class-leaders are these? They are not such as God would have. Some of them have been leaders ten or twenty years, and know nothing of this blessing. O my God, arouse class-leaders to see their responsibility. Souls are saved or lost according as they live. Another reason is the conduct of the members themselves. They neglect their class-meeting for any trifling thing—a slight cold, or a headache, or a rainy night, or a friend on a visit, or worldly business, or some member they cannot look upon with pleasure. If they make these excuses when they might have been there, every such excuse will border upon a lie, and God will condemn them unless they repent. Many members injure their souls by a love of fashion and dress. The rags of the devil—his best clothing—may be seen on the heads, and arms, and bodies of professors. O may the Lord strip them from every member of this Church! And Christians swarm by hundreds that never attend week-night preachings and prayer-meetings. And if a strange preacher should come and deal faithfully with them, and hold a prayer-meeting, they are to be found in their pews as dumb as if they had no tongues. Some of them will have their heads down as if they were asleep, instead of coming forward to assist the minister by bearing up his arms in conducting the meeting, and in pleading for the salvation of sinners and for the blood which cleanses from all sin. O my God, arouse every member of all the Churches into a life of activity. O my God, breathe upon us, O breathe upon us, that we may live.'

Such plain and practical addresses were always powerful for good. They were sometimes received in a spirit of meekness and docility, and most blessed revivals followed. But some people regarded him as too thorough and enthusiastic, and were disposed to take offence. Writing, December 16th, 1837, he says: 'I preached at Bawtry morning and night, and in the afternoon at Misson. Friends Fox and Butler went with

me. This was a high day to our souls. At night, before I went to preach, I was enabled to lay hold on God. I went relying on the promise of God, and believing that souls would be saved. I was enabled to preach with boldness, fearing no man. I had mighty liberty. Glory be to God for ever! He made bare His holy arm at the prayer-meeting. Saints came forward for sanctification, and sinners came for pardon. The communion rail was surrounded with seekers. Praise God, yea, praise Him, all ye hosts of heaven. Praise Him, ye inhabitants of earth; for He is worthy to be praised. That night the Lord sanctified believers and saved sinners. O my God, ride on—ride on with great power and glory. Save sinners in this town and circuit by thousands. Bless God, about twenty were converted that night. It had been reported to me that the Bawtry people were very respectable and rather proud, and could not do with much noise, and I must be careful not to offend them. But, glory to God, He helped me to cast off my fears. I preached fearing no man; my voice was up, and the power of God was in the word. One member, a pious man, had prayed in the morning for God to save sinners, even if it was with confusion. And when God answered his prayer, and began to save by confusion, he was one of the first to run away. He thought such earnestness, with such plainness, and such a noise, would offend the congregation, and do an injury to the cause of religion. God looketh not as man looketh; His ways are not the ways of man, who is but dust and ashes. Friends Fox and Butler are two mighty young men of God, and gave me great help. Praise God, O praise His holy name for ever for what He has done at this place. Praise Him for ever.'

Passing through the village of Eastoft one day with his cart, the people told him there was to be a meeting at the chapel, and they asked him to preach. He had not time to put up his horse and occupy the pulpit, so he stood upon the cart and preached, while the horse stood still. He had a good congregation, and some good was done.

After being a year on trial he was examined and accepted as a full and accredited local preacher.

During his year of probation he had conducted successful revival services in his own and six other circuits ; namely, Doncaster, Epworth, Barton, Grimsby, Market Rasen, Brigg, and Pontefract.

His detractors said that his converts were labouring under a temporary excitement, and would relapse in a few days or weeks to their former modes of life. Doubtless a small percentage of unstable and excitable people would do so, but the work was far more real and genuine than they imagined. At Binbroke and Market Rasen a genuine revival began at the time of his visits, and continued for months. The best evidence of its genuineness was its permanence, for in three months about one hundred were added to the Society. At Bonby also, in the Grimsby Circuit, about twenty were received into the Church, and in many other places similar results followed his visits. Many of these became local preachers, leaders, and prominent men in the Church, and some are alive to this day.

He had diligently read the standard books of Methodist theology, and was able to give intelligent and satisfactory answers at his examination. His knowledge of Scripture was accurate, and intimate, and far-reaching. He had read the Bible systematically and consecutively through, four or five times, at his private devotions, besides reading it regularly in the public services of the sanctuary.

His religious experience was equally satisfactory. Since the day of his conversion he had never had a moment's doubt of his acceptance with God. Every day he could sing :

‘ My God, I am Thine,
What a comfort Divine,
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine ! ’

In the heavenly Lamb
Thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.

My Jesus to know,
And feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below.’

Thus, on all the subjects in which he was examined, he received the approval of his brethren, and had his name put on the Doncaster Plan. It is the custom for the names of preachers to be inserted in the order of their seniority, and, as the youngest local preacher in the circuit, his name appeared at the foot of the Plan. He lived to be the oldest local preacher, and see his name at the head of the list; but he never tarnished his reputation, or brought himself into disgrace, as long as he lived.

The great Head of the Church called him to preach, and qualified him for his work. His brethren simply endorsed and confirmed that call.

C H A P T E R V I.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

THE Wesleyan Conference of 1837 was held at Leeds, and its special means of grace were highly appreciated by Mr. Marsden. He says :

'I went to Leeds Conference on Saturday, July 29th, and attended a band-meeting. I had a precious time. I struggled some time with the enemy whether I should speak or not. At length I overcame the enemy by the grace of God, and I had much liberty in speaking. On Sunday I had a good day. I heard four sermons. At night the Rev. Mr. Young of Liverpool preached, and the devil's kingdom was shaken, sinners were saved, and backsliders healed. On Monday the Rev. Mr. Banks preached in the forenoon, and believers were sanctified. On Tuesday Mr. Young preached in the open air, and the venerable Hodgson Casson gave a powerful exhortation. On Wednesday I fell in with a company of holy women from York, who had great power with God, and who laboured earnestly to point sinners to the bleeding Lamb.'

He spent a week among such scenes and successes as these, and returned to his own circuit full of love to God, and pity for perishing souls.

This week of spiritual enjoyment seems to have made a profound impression on him. It confirmed his decision to work for God, and rescue the perishing sinners around him ; and it accentuated those strong opinions he had already expressed as to the needs of the Church and the claims of a fallen world.

He had a select circle of friends, such as Butler, Waring, Unsworth, and Naylor, who were willing to go with him any-

where, and share his toils and triumphs. He would take his horse and light cart early on the Sunday morning, drive over to some neglected village, and spend the day in arduous toil.

On Sunday, August 27th, 1837, just after his return from Conference, he took friends Butler and Waring with him to a village called Smeaton in the Pontefract Circuit. They had sent the people word they were coming to rouse them, but they made no preparations to receive them, and did not even open the chapel door. Thus the evangelists found themselves in a strange village, on a Sunday morning, among a people who were not prepared to receive them. They went from door to door, inviting the inhabitants to the chapel. They found the chapel-keeper, and as soon as he had opened the doors they drew a large and attentive congregation. They sang, and prayed, and preached. In the afternoon they held an open-air service, and gathered such a congregation as Smeaton had rarely seen. The Word came with power, and touched the people, and roused their sympathies, and many cried for mercy. In the evening they packed the chapel again to suffocation, and had a glorious time. After a late prayer-meeting these three worthies drove home to Doncaster, with the satisfaction that they had done a bit of honest hard work which God would own and bless.

As often as he could spare a week evening, he would preach and conduct revival services. Thus, on Tuesday, December 26th, 1837, he writes :

‘ Friend Butler and I went to Over-Cumberworth ; and I preached to them twice that night. At the first service, the mighty power of God was in our midst, believers were quickened and sanctified, and sinners were saved. Hallelujah for ever ! While this was going on, a second congregation came up to the doors and windows to see and hear what we had up. I invited them into the chapel about ten o’clock, and preached again.’

In the midst of all this excitement and success it is interesting to notice how carefully he watched his own heart, and kept it with all diligence. His constant prayer was that God would own his labours and bless him with abundant success,

but keep him free from pride and worldliness. This is clear from his own words of prayer and praise.

‘January 7th, 1838.—Praise God, I have begun another year. May God help me to live this year to His honour and glory as I never did. I feel determined by God’s help to spend and be spent in His service. I feel daily His blood cleanses me from all sin. My evidence is brighter than ever. What thousands there are in the Church that live without this blessing! O my God, arouse the Church to seek after all its privileges. Mr. Harris says: “So long have we accustomed ourselves to be content with little things that we have gone far in disqualifying ourselves for the reception of great things.” O my God, open mine eyes to behold all my privileges. Give my soul an impulse, and raise me nearer to Thy throne. I want a spiritual earthquake to take place in my soul every day. Bramwell said: “It is well for us that God is almighty. God can deliver us out of the greatest dangers, difficulties, trials, troubles, and besetments that earth and hell have within them. The least trial does not come before it receives a permit from the throne, and then God sends a reinforcement of His power for the protection of His children.” Praise God for ever.’

‘February 9th.—I preached to a large congregation at Bonley. Saints and sinners came forward; some professed to get liberty, others were much blessed. O my God, bless this simple people, and enable me to labour for eternity, with a single eye to Thy glory. Bless me with all the fulness of the Gospel—all the weight of the Gospel—all the power of the Gospel—and all the glory of the Gospel, that sinners may be saved by tens, by hundreds, and by thousands, as in the days of the apostles. And in the face of heaven, and in the name of the Holy Trinity, I will give God the glory.’

‘February 11th, Binbroke.—Bless God I am spared to visit this place again. It is now about twelve months since I preached in this town—a time never to be forgotten. The Lord displayed His saving power, and His work has gone on ever since. The good people met together on Friday to commemorate the day on which the Lord began to revive His work, and He displayed His saving power again. On the Saturday

night we had a prayer-meeting, and it was a glorious time : one backslider was healed and many were blessed. On Sunday, February 12th, I preached three times. This was a glorious day : the word came with power and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Souls were saved, backsliders healed, and believers sanctified. In the evening of this glorious day the penitents in the gallery of the chapel were brought into a pew, instead of the communion rail. A married woman among them soon got liberty and was made happy. Her husband by some means got intelligence that his wife was a penitent in the chapel. He came in like a devil incarnate, to drag her away and punish her. I was standing near when he seized me by the collar, but other men more powerful laid hold of him. His poor wife made her escape out of the chapel, and dared not go home that night. She went in the morning, but, bless God, the lion was chained. He growled hard in oaths and curses against her, but his wicked hands were kept away from her.'

'February 25th.—I preached at Bawtry in the morning, and at Misson in the afternoon. In this village thirteen persons promised to begin to meet in class, and a leader was chosen after service in the chapel. O my God, seal them to the day of redemption. I preached again at Bawtry at night, and had such a time as I shall never forget. The almighty power of God was upon me in preaching. The word came like a thunderbolt. The devil would have all his children bomb and shot proof ; but this day, when God opened His battery of conviction upon sinners, the shells burst, and their souls felt the fire of conviction, and they cried, "Lord, save, or I perish." It was a glorious time. Praise God. O my God, keep my soul from spiritual pride. It is Thy work : Lord, I am Thy servant ; make me just what Thou wouldest have me be.'

'March 4th, Thorne.—I had a sweet time here in the morning. At Moor Ends in the afternoon the people received the word with gladness, believers were blessed, sinners convicted, and every soul in the place felt the power of God. Eight or ten persons promised to begin and join the people of God.

One professed to find pardon and peace. At Thorne at night good was done, and I had a glorious time in preaching.'

' March 6th, Althorpe.—I preached to a crowded congregation. The Lord backed His word with power ; penitents came forward and got into glorious liberty. The next night I visited them again. The Lord was in the place, and more good was done. We are languid in our prayers when we ought to be inspired. What we have expected is only our feebleness. There is too much oneness and sameness amongst us. We go to preach, we go to hear, we go to class-meeting, we go to prayer-meeting, and we expect no good. We go to work like an old man eighty years of age to break stones on a cold winter's day. Is it any wonder that we do so little ? O my God, set our souls on fire ; set the whole Church on fire with zeal and love to Thee. I am determined through grace to be what the world calls "*crazed!*" I feel as if I wanted a spiritual earthquake in my soul every day to blow me up into a more glorious region. O,

"Arm of the Lord, awake ! awake !
Thine own immortal strength put on."

Bend the iron pillars of my soul. Sink me to the lowest depths of humility, and raise me up to the highest privileges of religious experience. In one of the villages where I travel, a woman got her soul sanctified, and, like David, she was full of light and power, so that she could run through a troop or leap over a wall. Some of the poor "wise" members said she was "*crazed*," and persuaded the travelling preacher to call upon her. He did so ; but, when down on his knees in prayer with her, he felt what it was that made her *crazed*. He felt the mighty power of God. O how members show their false colours and lukewarm hearts when they say of lively souls, "Let them alone, they will soon cool down, they are in their first love," and so on ! They speak of being more settled in their feelings than these young enthusiasts. I would rather be settled in a parish workhouse for life than have such settled cold feelings towards my Lord.'

' March 13th.—I preached at Howden. On my way I rode

my horse, and, having a small parcel before me, I let the reins be too slack. The horse was trotting at a good speed, when he stumbled and pitched on his head, bruising himself in one or two places, and then fell flat on his side. I might have been killed, but, glory to God Who giveth His angels charge over them that fear Him, my feet were taken out of the stirrups, and I escaped unhurt. If any man ever had a heavenly fall, I had one; for I should not have known I had fallen but for my knees being dirty. Glory be to God for my deliverance! At Howden I was enabled to preach with life and power, and we had some cheering results.'

'March 15th.—At Luddington I had a glorious time; believers were quickened, and souls were saved. The chapel was full, and at the close of the service not a soul went out. All stayed the prayer-meeting.'

'March 18th, Doncaster.—I preached in Marshgate in the open air. We had a prayer-meeting in the street, and sinners were affected and cried for mercy.'

'March 25th, Bintley.—Sinners are very hard at this place, and religion is very low. About ten of the Doncaster friends came with me to help me in the service. In the afternoon we went singing round the town. The people came to see what was to do, and I preached. The glory of the Lord was present. The devil fell like lightning from heaven. Souls were saved. Praise God.'

'April 13th, Good Friday.—I preached at Bently at night. Ten or twelve friends came over from Doncaster, and helped me. The Lord was there. Souls were awakened. Many came forward, and the meeting was truly glorious.'

'April 15th.—I preached at Consbro' morning and night, and held a love-feast in the afternoon. The love-feast was a good time to many souls, and many testified to having received sanctification. This day till near evening service I felt out of love with myself, and was led to cry mightily to God in private, and smite upon my breast, and cry, "God be merciful to me!" We went into the town, sang a hymn, and I exhorted the people. Numbers followed us to the chapel, and I had a very large and attentive congregation. The word came with

power, and I was led out as I never was before. I believe many went home that night wounded. Nearly all the congregation, both from gallery and body of chapel, stayed the prayer-meeting; penitents came forward; some got liberty, and a glorious time we had. Hallelujah to God for ever !'

~ 'I feel more determined to serve God than ever. O Lord, help me ! I feel the blood cleanses, but this is not all I want. I want to be filled with all the fulness of the Gospel—the love of a John, the courage of a Peter, and the zeal of a Paul. I want to have the mind that is in Christ, and almighty faith, that, whenever I preach, the arrows of conviction may find their way to sinners' hearts. O Lord God Almighty, prepare me, furnish me with every ministerial ability, that I may be an ornament in Thy Church. I never shall be a shining light with respect to learning or eloquence, but, O my God, Thou canst make me a burning and shining light; make me a flame of fire. O for an earnest of the Spirit of power and of glory ! Revive me every moment. Enable me to live like some immortal being let down from Thy throne. Make me a stranger to the fear of man, and help me to carry with me an atmosphere of salvation. Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do ? Lord, Lord, lead Thy ignorant, unworthy creature, every breath, thought, word, feeling, action, day, night, hour, moment; and Thou shalt have the praise. Amen.'

'May 23d.—I preached at Rawcliffe to a small congregation, and had a good time. Before I went to preach, I put faith in the God of promises, that souls should be saved. Glory, glory, glory to God ! there were some real penitents. They came willingly to the penitent bench, and the Lord was truly amongst us.'

'May 28th.—I have preached about fifteen times since the 23d of May. In the Rotherham Circuit, at Swinton, the Lord saved souls, and sanctified believers, and the same signs and wonders were manifested at several places in the Doncaster, Epworth, Barton on Humber, and Market Rasen Circuits. Praise God for ever ! His presence goes with me everywhere. To Him be all the glory for ever and ever ! Amen.'

Notwithstanding the high state of Christian experience to

which he had attained, and the marvellous and uniform success that attended his labours, he was strangely misunderstood and foully slandered and misrepresented.

It was said he was crazy, and only fit for a lunatic asylum. Nobody but a madman or a crack-brained enthusiast would think of praying every hour of the day, and preaching as often as he could get anybody to hear him. These things were said of him by professing Christians. Hence his reference to the holy woman in this chapter, who was said to be ‘crazed’ because she was sanctified, and his determination to be ‘crazed’ in the same way. These assaults were peculiarly painful and annoying ; but friend Naylor cheered him by reminding him that ‘all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution ;’ and that when the Saviour was performing some of His mightiest works, the people said, ‘He hath a devil, and is mad.’ Friend Naylor told him to take his persecution as a compliment. There are some men so dangerous and destructive to the devil’s kingdom that Satan has to watch them night and day, and wing and wound them when he can. But there are others so harmless and powerless that he need not waste powder and shot over them. So he learned to bear these slanders meekly and patiently for the Master’s sake.

Sometimes those who had known him before his conversion would threaten him with physical punishment, presuming on the meek and gentle spirit of the Gospel. They thought they might defy him with impunity now, and if they ‘smote him on the one cheek, he would turn the other also.’ But a merciful Providence restrained them, and saved him from this temptation. I have heard him say that it would have been a terrible trial to him if any of his opponents had used physical force. He should have forgotten himself, and given them such a chastisement as they would have remembered to their dying day ; and perhaps he would have brought himself into condemnation.

Perhaps the most common form of persecution was deliberate falsehood. His enemies circulated a story to the effect that he had committed suicide. They told the most circumstantial and plausible story, and were so favoured by circumstances,

that even his own family were unable to contradict it. They said he had hung himself at Gainsborough in his bedroom at the inn where he put up on a certain day and hour named. The story was carried all over the district where he travelled, and was readily believed by those who had no love for religion. There were no railways, or telegraphs, at that time, and it was impossible to communicate with his friends at Gainsborough ; so the lie got a few days' start, and travelled as fast as bad news usually goes. But on the following Saturday he drove home as usual, and contradicted the wicked falsehood.

There were many slanders that were not so easily disposed of, however ; for he was bitterly assailed and misrepresented both in his public and private life. The most outrageous falsehoods were uttered and repeated, and he became so familiar with them that he ceased to contradict them.

But he was severely criticised for his extravagances in preaching, and for the excitement he caused at his revival services. His impulsive nature often carried him beyond the bounds of prudence, and many of his haphazard expressions were too strong, and needed modifying and qualifying. Yet his motives were always pure and his intentions right. He was asked one day by a friend : ‘ How is it so much good is done through you ? ’ His reply was : ‘ When I go to preach, I resolve that it shall be heaven or hell to every man and woman in that congregation.’

He was asked again : ‘ How is it that people are so often offended at you ? ’ His reply was : ‘ If I don’t make sinners fall out with themselves, or fall out with me, I have failed in my duty.’

He had only one idea, and that was ingrained and interwoven with his nature : ‘ *I will save men.*’ He was not a mere copyist, but a genuine and original character. He had so much energy and force of character that he was bound to make a stir anywhere. It was impossible to hide him under a bushel, or keep his energies within ordinary bounds.

The reader will readily perceive that such a man was sure to be misunderstood. I have shown his aims and motives, and enabled the reader thus to form a true conception of the man.

But those who only looked upon the outside, and saw but the rough, noisy, demonstrative, aggressive preacher, were sure to be mistaken in their judgment of him.

I am inclined to think he cared too little for the good opinion of others. He was a man of one idea, and his whole soul was absorbed in his work.

CHAPTER VII.

TOILING ON.

FROM 1838 to 1847, his evangelistic work was pursued with intense ardour and devotion. He attended diligently to his business, and made the most of his opportunities to improve the position and prospects of his family; but whenever he could spare a few days, if only from Saturday to Monday, he spent them in preaching and revival work.

Thus he travelled to Lincoln, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, and other great centres of population. In one of these journeys he fell in with a kind friend, who recognised his abilities and worth, and saw, beneath his rough exterior a man of holiness and power. This friend gave him a copy of Murray's *Grammar* and Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric*. He took the hint in the spirit in which it was given, and resolved to study these books carefully, and to improve his style of composition. He saw that it was not enough to gather his knowledge of men from behind a shop-counter and from public-houses and the roadside. He saw that his usefulness would be considerably increased if he could speak his mother tongue correctly, and present his thoughts in such a form that even educated men could understand and appreciate them. His bold and wild energy led him into confusion of metaphors, and grammatical mistakes, and incoherent sentences, that provoked laughter and derision. But he made a wise and profitable use of these books, and soon became a correct and impressive speaker.

He thus describes a brief holiday in the summer of 1840 :

'I have been a missionary excursion for fourteen days with Brother Tonge from Gainsborough. We set off July 26th, and

returned August 8th. Brother Tonge is a zealous man of God, of rare power and success; for the Lord has blessed him with thousands. I preached out of doors at Bridgehill, Gainsborough, and then drove on to Lincoln, where I preached four times. God was mightily with us; for many got into liberty, and several were sanctified.

'At Langworth I preached again, and twice at Tetford in the Horncastle Circuit, where much good was done. Then we drove to Spilsby, and preached again, and the Lord helped me wonderfully. We finished our journey at Alford, where I preached six times in different parts of the circuit, and God blessed me both in body and soul. Praise Him for all the good received from Him, and done by Him!

'The enemy followed hard after me. He has sent abroad many flying vile reports about me; but, bless God, they are all lies. With the Psalmist I will say: "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" While on this Rock I stand, and while I lean on Him on Whom archangels lean, I will bid defiance to the world. Lord, help me. Amen.'

About this time his mother was in delicate health, and he preached one Sunday at Branston, an important village in the Lincoln Circuit. At the close of a heavy day's work he held a prayer-meeting as usual till nearly ten o'clock. When all was over, and he was about to sit down to supper with his host, his brother, Mr. Joseph Marsden, arrived from Doncaster with a message that his mother was likely to die, and he must return at once if he wished to see her alive. He ordered meal and water to be given to the horse—a valuable animal, of which he was very fond—and sat down to a hasty supper. After supper he knelt at the table, and fervently prayed that God would spare his mother's life till he reached home. Then he prayed that God would give him journeying mercies, and strengthen his horse for its work, as there was no time to give him a full meal. The Lord answered his prayers. The horse made the journey with ease, and his mother's life was prolonged.

This prayer for the horse may seem strange to those who

seldom pray ; but it is a good illustration of his views of prevailing prayer, and thoroughly characteristic of the man. He told the Lord all he knew and all he wanted. He believed that his horse had a right to God's good care and providence when it was doing its duty, and he did not forget to mention it in the hour of need.

This horse was named 'Short,' and had been the hero of many a strange adventure since the night it refused to cross the canal bridge in the dark, and so saved his life. It could always be trusted to go a long day's journey, and bear a heavy burden, without showing signs of fatigue. It knew his habits, and understood his peculiarities thoroughly. Whether its master were riding or driving in the daytime, he would be reading, and it found its way in safety without his guidance. He could mind his book, and it would pick its way through busy streets or rough country lanes. When they were belated and travelling in the night, it was sure-footed and reliable. He might throw the reins on its neck, and leave himself in its hands, with perfect safety. It was the only horse he ever drove that did not come home in disgrace with bruised knees, or broken shafts, or some more serious accident.

At the time of his conversion, when he consecrated all he had to God, he included 'Short' in the list. Henceforth 'Short' was to be the Lord's horse. It was to carry him to his preaching appointments, and be the messenger of the Gospel. The horse was a faithful servant for years, and by a good character and steady habits it earned its master's gratitude and affection.

Occasionally it was in danger. Its master and his friend Butler had been preaching at Smeaton one night, and were driving home, when a tramp stopped them and wanted to ride. It was a lonely part of the road, and the district was then infested with 'footpads' and thieves. These highway robbers often used violence if their victims resisted, and it was evident the tramp was one of a gang ; for they could hear him exchange signals with his confederates. But while they were parleying with the tramp, 'Short' bolted at such a speed that he dashed through the men, scattering them right and left, and leaving

them prostrate in the road. He never stopped till he had safely reached Doncaster.

On another occasion, they had been holding services at Blythe till nearly midnight, and were driving at a good pace up the hill, when ‘Short’ fell, and the shock sent them flying over its head. It lay perfectly still without a struggle till they had removed the cart, when it sprang to its feet, ready to resume the journey. When its master found that nobody was injured, he thanked God for their deliverance, and at a tea-meeting next day gave a thank-offering to some charitable object to express his gratitude.

During this period of his life his activity was astonishing. He was working hard all day, and preaching and praying almost all night. To use the words of friend Butler, ‘he had never done praying.’ He utilised every moment.

In the York and Easingwold Circuits the Lord wonderfully owned his labours. He preached fourteen times at York during his visit, and held prayer-meetings each time. On the Sunday evening a young man who was a graduate of Dublin University came into the chapel, and stood by the door. He was evidently impressed by what he saw and heard, but the noise and excitement surprised him. During the prayer-meeting Mr. Marsden went and spoke to him about his soul, and persuaded him to go to the penitent form. After a little persuasion he went, and next morning he received a sense of God’s favour, and called to thank the preacher and tell him the good news. The young man afterwards became an earnest and successful evangelist.

At Wigan, in Lancashire, he was wonderfully successful among the colliers and cotton operatives. He visited the town with Mr. Greenbury for a week’s mission, and met with a lively reception. At that time political feeling ran very high in the town, and it was dangerous to hold public meetings in the streets, for fear of a riot and serious disturbance. The Roman Catholics were peculiarly bitter against the Protestants, and it was thought undesirable to provoke them to hostilities by conducting open-air services.

They met in the old chapel for worship, and gathered a good congregation, and had a few penitents. But they were not

satisfied with this slow and ordinary progress : they must make their mark on the town. On Monday at noon they went to a contractor's yard, and gathered the workmen together during the dinner hour for worship. They knelt among the bricks and timber, and prayed so touchingly and fervently for these rough workmen that some of them were moved to tears. Then Mr. Marsden announced that he would preach at the 'big lamp' in the market-place at seven o'clock, and asked the workmen to come and protect him from assault, and hear him preach. As soon as it became known that he intended to preach in the market-place, a number of rough Irishmen declared that they would take his life rather than he should preach there. Undeterred by threats of violence, he took his stand by the 'big lamp' at the appointed hour, and his friends from the contractor's yard formed his body-guard and surrounded him on every side. They sang, and he prayed ; but as soon as he began to preach, a mob of Irishmen attempted to storm the position and drag him into their midst. But they were met with cries of 'Stand back,' 'Touch him if you dare,' 'We'll defend him.' Regardless of these warnings, the Irishmen came on to the attack ; but his body-guard repelled the attack, and kept the disturbers at bay till the sermon was ended. Then they formed in procession, and, followed by an immense crowd, marched to the chapel and crowded it. The service was a grand success. The Spirit of God arrested several of his opponents, and many of his friends were converted.

The next night he went again to conduct a service in the market-place, and there was an enormous crowd. A champion fighter was put up by the mob to interrupt the service and beat the preacher. In the crowd were a number of wrestlers, prize-fighters, and roughs, who had come for the purpose of making a disturbance and putting down street-preaching.

Mr. Greenbury spoke first. He told them how he had once been as wild and rough as any of them. He had been a wrestler and prize-fighter, and knew all their secrets ; and if they had challenged him some years ago, he would have accepted their challenge, and would have made some of them very sorry for their insolence. Then he told how a life of

brutality and drunkenness degraded him and robbed him of his manhood. Even when his poor widowed mother lay on her deathbed, he came home drunk one night with a donkey across his shoulders, and threw it on the bed, saying, ‘Here, mother ; the devil has come to fetch you.’ But the grace of God had changed him from a lion to a lamb, and what that grace could do for him it could do for every sinner in Wigan.

By this time he had gained the ears of the multitude, and the majority were in favour of allowing the service to proceed. But the champion fighter became noisy and demonstrative when he saw things taking a peaceful turn. He assailed Mr. Marsden with oaths and curses, and challenged him to a personal encounter. Mr. Marsden walked up to him, put his arm round his neck, looked steadily into his eyes, and said : ‘The Lord bless thee, lad ! Thou little know’st what thou art saying. If it were not for the grace of God, I might have been tempted to beat thee within an inch of thy life. I dare let thee tie my right hand behind my back, and I can keep thee at arm’s length with my left hand. Thou art challenging a man that has put thy betters up a chimney or behind a fire many a time.’ Then he began to pray with such earnestness and pathos that the man was moved to tears.

When they adjourned to the chapel, he still retained his hold of the champion, and never let him go till he had marched him to the penitent form, and induced him to cry for mercy. There was a very large crowd, mainly composed of the roughest characters from the lowest parts of the town ; but they followed him to the chapel with perfect docility, and many of them were that night converted.

These scenes were repeated night after night, till scores of the very worst men and women were gathered round the communion rail in penitence and prayer. Some of these afterwards became chosen witnesses for the truth, and remarkable for their piety and usefulness. Many of them lived holy lives, and died triumphant deaths ; but some are alive to this day.

The revival that commenced during his first visit laid the foundation of some of the branch schools and mission rooms in other parts of the town. He became so popular in Wigan

that he was invited every year to spend a week among his spiritual children, and lead them on to new fields of conquest.

Such scenes of excitement and opposition always put him on his mettle. He never preached more powerfully, nor prayed more earnestly, than when he was opposed and resisted. Every act and word betrayed his fixed determination to save men.

Previous to his open-air services at Wigan, he had some stirring times with the members of Society there. The local preachers, leaders, and members had fallen into a formal, lifeless, and low spiritual condition. They were not in fighting trim, and he could neither get them to pray in public at the prayer-meeting, nor to go out into the streets to gather in the people, nor co-operate with him in any way.

He managed to get them together by a free tea-meeting, and gave them a stirring address on ‘Holiness,’ and urged them to seek entire sanctification. There was no response to his appeal ; so they sang a verse or two, and he called on some of them to pray. They were all dumb, so he prayed till he frightened some of them. Then for about ten minutes he gave them a few of the strongest home-truths they had ever heard. He told them they had a name to live, but they were dead ; that sinners were perishing around them, and they laid it not to heart ; that God had set them as watchmen, but they were dumb dogs every one of them ; that if they proved unfaithful to their privileges and duties, God would raise up another Church in their place ; that they could not do without God Almighty for a moment, but He was independent of their cold, selfish, formal services always. In language more masculine and forcible than polite, he gave them such a lesson as they never forgot. Old members came again to the penitent form, seeking pardon and power ; and many of them were sanctified. Old feuds were forgotten, old hatchets were buried, old offences were forgiven, and a distracted, torn, and scattered Church was melted and moulded together into one compact united body.

Then the power of Pentecost came down. They were ready to pray, and toil, and work, and go with him anywhere, and do anything for the Master.

This was the beginning of the great revival at Wigan ; I enter so fully into the particulars of this case, because it is a fair sample of what he did elsewhere. It is no wonder therefore that invitations came to him from all quarters.

If a Church had received a baptism of the Spirit, and wanted a champion to go into the slums and alleys and public-houses to rescue the perishing, they sent for him. They knew he would dare and do what other men could not do. He would venture into dens of infamy and haunts of vice, where no policeman dared go alone, and he would bring out from these unlikely places some penitent sinners, and lead them to a better life.

If a Church had been toiling long, and had caught nothing, they would put the Gospel net into his experienced hands. A Sunday-school teacher at Nottingham had spent weeks and months working for the conversion of his class. He had ten or a dozen youths, whose future depended on the choice they were about to make ; but he was powerless to influence them. One Sunday evening they walked to New Lenton to hear Mr. Marsden preach. He saw them, and prayed for them, and mentally resolved that not one of them should escape. He preached a powerful sermon, and began the prayer-meeting before anybody had the chance of leaving the chapel. Then he walked up to these young men, and led them one by one to the penitent form. They were every one converted at that service.

Sometimes he was invited to arouse sleeping Churches and bring to life the dead. Then he preached to the members, and insisted on holiness and unity.

Thus the claims of the Churches oppressed him. He was willing to serve them, but they made such demands on his time that his business had to suffer. It was a serious financial burden to him, and he was for some time in doubt as to what he ought to do. Should he attend to his own business, and make a fortune ? or should he let his business decline, and give himself entirely to evangelistic work ? He shall answer the question for himself.

‘ Doncaster, May 11th, 1846. Monday morning.—I am

happy—very happy in the love of God. Of late my soul has been prospering. • Perhaps I never felt it so well with me as I have done for some weeks past.

‘A circumstance that has occupied my mind for twenty months past has been a hinderance to me and a burden to my soul, and has interfered with my labours also. About a month ago, the Lord enabled me to strike a surrender, and ever since it has been better with me. I feel relieved of a burden, and the pressure is gone.

‘In future, may the Lord guide me in every thought, word, and action. I never felt my heart so warm in God’s cause as I do now. I long to preach the Gospel to poor sinners every day.

“ Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name ;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
‘ Behold, behold the Lamb ! ’ ”

‘ *If the Lord ever puts me in such a position in life that I can give up business, I promise this day by His help that I will lay down the world, and take up His Gospel, and preach it till death.*

‘ *Lord, help me.* Thou knowest the weakness of man, and covenants are of no avail without Divine aid. Lord, make me faithful to Thy cause in every calling in life.’

After making this solemn covenant with God, he reviews very briefly the scenes of his labour during the past year. He says :

‘ The Lord has wonderfully owned my labours. Hundreds have been converted in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Lancashire. At Wigan we had a very glorious time, and a great number found salvation. They came up to the communion rail by dozens. At Skelmanthorpe many came up for pardon and sanctification, and the work was glorious. I visited Southwell, Notts, with an intention to preach two days ; but the work breaking out gloriously prolonged my visit for the week. The Society had been torn in pieces by dissension and strife, and they had had a special meeting of leaders, preachers, and the chairman of the District, to consider the

case ; but all to no purpose. The Lord by fire melted out the cast metal, and purified and remodelled the Society, which was nearly doubled in a short time. The work was exceedingly glorious, for many were converted.'

He was now recognised as a successful preacher and evangelist, and was fully employed in the work.

Let us pause to consider some of his plans and methods, before we resume the personal narrative.

CHAPTER VIII.

RECONNOITRING.

In his evangelistic work he was continually receiving invitations from new friends in strange places, and he always tried to adapt himself to the special needs of the place.

If he accepted an invitation of this kind, he always impressed on the leaders and members of the Society the necessity of personal consecration to Christ, and of united and zealous co-operation with him in his work. Then he took a stroll through the town or village, making good use of his eyes and ears, and forming his own impressions of the place and of the people. He regarded the place as a stronghold of the devil, well fortified and watched by the enemy of souls; and in the Lord's name he was about to attack it. But, like a wise general, he would find out the strength and weakness of the enemy, and ascertain how he had disposed of his forces, and decide how he could most successfully attack and overthrow him.

I have a vivid recollection of some of his reconnoitring expeditions that were remarkably successful.

Every town and village has some particular spot which by custom and habit comes to be the 'seat of the scornful.' It may be the corner of a public-house, or some particular part of the market-place, or the cross-roads in a village, or any spot where people can meet to discuss the news of the day or retail the latest gossip.

Usually half a dozen lazy fellows sit on their heels, with their backs against the wall, smoking and watching the passers-by. A few more loiter about in groups with their hands buried deeply in their pockets, discussing a pigeon-flying match

or a dog race. Their conversation is so filthy and their behaviour so rude, that respectable people pass on the opposite side of the street. These men have no love for the Gospel, and are ever ready to express their contempt for the clergy and ministers of all denominations.

He always sought out these men, and paid them a visit. His position as a local preacher often enabled him to overcome their objections to a professional ministry. I have heard them say, ‘Yon chap isn’t one of your white-necktie chaps. He does not think hissel’ too proud to talk to us. I’ll go and hearken what he has to say.’

On one occasion, one of these men was peculiarly severe with Methodism. He denounced ‘the penny-a-week and shilling-a-quarter folks’ with much warmth. ‘You seem to know a good deal about those Methodists,’ said Mr. Marsden; ‘you might have been one of them years ago.’ A loud laugh from the bystanders, and a savage oath from the scorner, showed that he was right, and the man was a backslider. So he followed up his advantage by saying :

‘And what have you gained by leaving the Methodists? You have spent more than a penny a week and a shilling a quarter at the public-house. Do you find the devil’s service any better than the service of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you were a sodierl of Queen Victoria, you would wear her livery, and people would know it by the clothes you wear. But the “devil’s own” wear his livery in their faces. You may know them sometimes by their rags, and dirt, and poverty; but yon can always tell them by their faces. I would not wear your face for five hundred a year! Get back again to the Methodists, and when the Lord Jesus Christ gives you a new heart, you may have your portrait taken, for you will have a face worth looking at.’

By this time a small crowd of passers by had assembled to witness the discomfiture of the scorner, and he slunk away. I have reason to believe that this visit to the camp of the enemy was productive of lasting good to some who had been in the habit of ‘sitting in the seat of the scornful.’

A favourite plan of getting into conversation with the people

was to walk up to a stranger, and ask if he could tell which house the Lord Jesus Christ lived in. Of course he received some curious answers to such a strange question, but he was satisfied if he could only set people thinking.

A young wife was nursing her baby at the door, when he walked up to her and said : ‘Does the Lord Jesus Christ live here?’

She smiled and said, ‘I hope so.’

Looking at the ring on her finger, he said : ‘You are married : does your husband live here?’

She answered promptly, ‘Yes.’

He replied : ‘You don’t hope so, you know it. And if the Lord Jesus Christ lived here, you would know it. He would not put a ring round your finger, but He would put His love in your heart, and make you so happy that life would be one sweet song. You will know it when He comes to live with you.’

A few doors further he met a crabbed, cynical, old cobbler with the question : ‘Does the Lord Jesus Christ live here?’

A merry twinkle was in his eye as he said : ‘I should think not. He would be a fool if He did ; and so would anybody else that had the chance of getting out of this place and did not go. I tell ye, Mister, they are a bad lot round here. I should think the devil lives in every house in this row.’

‘Well, but where does the Lord Jesus Christ live?’ inquired Mr. Marsden.

‘I expect He lives in heaven,’ said the cobbler ; ‘and if I should ever be lucky enough to get there, I should have sense enough to stop. You don’t think I would want to come back again, do you ? and I don’t think He would.’

‘Eh, my friend ! but this would be a sorry world for you and me if the Lord Jesus Christ did not live in it. I should want to be going quickly from it, if He were to leave it.’

Then followed a direct personal appeal to the old cobbler, to open his heart and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as his Guest and Saviour. He knelt down beside the cobbler’s stall, and prayed that the sunshine of God’s favour might abide in that house.

A few doors further he repeated the question to a respectable-looking old woman : ‘ Which of these houses does the Lord Jesus Christ live in ? ’

‘ You had better ask at number four. If He lives anywhere in this row, I think it will be at old Molly’s. It’s about the poorest house in this street, but it’s about the happiest.’

So he went to number four, and without knocking opened the door and walked in. ‘ Does the Lord Jesus Christ live here, Molly ? ’ he asked.

‘ Ay, bless the Lord, He does ; and if you are one of His childer, come in and sit you down, and let’s have a bit of talk with you,’ she replied.

‘ How long has the Lord Jesus Christ lived with you, Molly ? ’

‘ Above fifty years. This isn’t a very grand house for Him ; but, as poor as it is, He says Hell never leave me nor forsake me, and I’ll take good care I don’t leave nor forsake Him.’

He walked across the floor, helped himself to a chair, and sat listening to her simple story.

‘ You see I’m a bit lame. I were coming home from t’chapel one dark neet in my pattens, when t’wind blew t’candle out in my lantern, and I had to grope my way in darkness. Somebody had a load of coals in front of their door, and I fell over them and could not get up. I had to be carried home and put to bed. When t’doctor came, he said it were a very bad job, for I had broken my leg. I said, “ Bless the Lord, it would ’a been a deal worse if I had broken my neck.” You know, when old folks break their bones, it takes a long time to get them right again.’

After this apology for allowing him to help himself to a chair, they plunged into a brief conversation about the love of God to each of them. She told him how she could bless the Lord at all times, and His praise was continually in her mouth. And he said, ‘ Hallelujah ! ’ and she said, ‘ Bless the Lord ! ’ Then he knelt on that humble cottage hearth, and prayed that God’s richest blessings might rest on poor old Molly ; and when he went away, her pocket was a little heavier, and his was a little lighter.

In one of the lowest parts of the town was a row of wretched cottages called ‘the Rookery.’ He was coming through the street with a newspaper in his hand, when a rough-looking woman shouted after him: ‘You are a parson, and parsons should not read newspapers.’ He turned back, and found that the speaker was a middle-aged woman, standing washing at her door, with a short black pipe in her mouth; her children were ragged and dirty, and her home was lost in dirt and disorder. He said: ‘I am compelled to read the newspapers to see what the devil is doing in the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, and all over the country. How can I defeat him if I don’t know what he is doing?’

‘You are always talking about the devil,’ she answered; ‘you might know a deal about him.’

‘I ought to know a great deal,’ he replied; ‘for he used to be my master, and I served him faithfully for a good many years. But I quarrelled with him, and left his service, and now I am serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Eh! if you would only join His service, you would find such a difference as you little imagine. He would wash your heart—not in that dolly-tub, but in His precious blood, and make it pure clean. Come and join us to-night at the service, and give your heart to God.’

Just then a virago from a neighbouring house came rushing into the street, flourishing a wet mop, and cursing the preacher, and abusing the woman for talking with him. This increased the small crowd of dirty ungainly women and ragged children who had assembled to hear the contention. The new-comer was a tall, gaunt, masculine woman, with a dirty face and hair unkempt, and peculiarly offensive with her tongue. As soon as he got a chance of putting in a word, he asked the crowd if that woman’s husband had not gone away and left her. Somebody told him that she had been deserted for a long time.

‘I thought so,’ he replied; ‘no sane man could live with such a woman as that. Those fierce eyes and frowning features are signs hung outside to show what is within. I would not wear such a face as that for a thousand a year. It is time somebody came to preach the Gospel in this Rookery.’

By this time the virago had effected her escape from his

raking fire of home truths : so he distributed a few tracts, and gave a few invitations, about which he will hear again when the secrets of all hearts are made known.

He entered into conversation with the most notorious sceptic in the village. The man was busy in his garden, and was very proud of his success as a gardener. They talked about the properties of various kinds of soil, the peculiarities of the plants and flowers, and the mysteries of pruning, grafting, and inoculation, till the sceptic was wonderfully interested. Then Mr. Marsden spoke of the human mind and heart, and the fertilising, life-giving power of the Gospel, and the mysteries of the new birth and the plan of salvation. The sceptic was absorbed in the study of religious truth before he knew what he was doing, and showed his admiration for the preacher by attending every succeeding service he conducted. In speaking to me of this incident some time after, he said : ‘ I never saw such a man. He was a walking book on botany and gardening, and he swindled me into listening to his sermons as no man ever did.’

On another occasion, as he was reconnoitring, he met a poverty-stricken youth driving a donkey and cart, and earning a precarious living by carrying coals. He stopped him in the street, and told him the Lord Jesus Christ had something better for him to do than drive a donkey all his life. He briefly explained the plan of salvation to him, and told him to treat his donkey very kindly, and when his work was done at night he must come to chapel. The boy came, and that night he was converted. Soon afterwards he sold his donkey and cart, and started in business on his own account. The Lord prospered him, and he made a fortune, and used it wisely. He owes all he has in this world, under God’s blessing, to that wayside chat with Mr. Marsden.

Often in his visits to the homes of the poor he found wretched families who were not fit to be trusted with money. If he relieved them in that way, they would spend it in gin or beer ; so he would go to the nearest grocer’s shop and buy a loaf and some butter, or cheese, or bacon. Then he would come back with his parcel under his arm, and make them all

sit round the table and eat it. As they gathered to this simple feast, he would kneel down and pray for them. Then he would give them a cordial invitation to his services, and go away, leaving them to enjoy their food in peace.

At Accrington, in Lancashire, he was about to conduct a series of services, when he heard that a grand ball was to be held at one of the principal hotels in honour of a lady and gentleman who had been newly married. He was afraid that the excitement attending this ball would interfere with the success of his first service: so he said: ‘I will go to the ball, if some of you will accompany me.’ They went with him, and he marched up to the pianist during one of the intervals in the dancing and said, ‘Will you play a tune for me?’ He agreed to do so; and while the rest were gazing in blank astonishment, he gave out a suitable hymn, and he and his friends sang it. He then gave an address to the newly married pair, showing them the true way of happiness for time and eternity. His manner was so gentlemanly and courteous that the company listened with respect, and knelt down with him in prayer. He prayed till the Spirit of God touched their consciences, and many of them were in tears; and when he concluded, he invited them all to his service at the chapel. Many of them accepted his invitation, and several of them found the Saviour and became members of the Church.

On another occasion, when he was in a Lincolnshire village, he heard that a merry-making was taking place in the large room of a public-house. He went alone among the guests, and said to the fiddlers: ‘I suppose he that pays the piper may be allowed to choose the tune?’ They agreed; so he paid them to play a tune that he chose, while he sang two or three verses of a hymn. Then he wished the newly-married pair much happiness, and urged them to begin their wedded life by giving their hearts to God. After a short speech, full of wise and weighty words, he knelt down and prayed with them till there was not one in the room who did not feel the influence of the Spirit accompanying his prayer.

He visited one of the large towns in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the feast week. On his way to chapel on

the Sunday morning he found a stream of people going in the direction of a certain public-house. He went with them, and found that a man was roasting an ox in the yard and charging threepence each admission for those who wished to see it. The ox was to be eaten at noon, and there would be a wild carnival, with drunkenness and sin. He went up to the man and reminded him that it was the Sabbath-day, and that he was breaking the laws of God and tempting others to commit sin. The man resented his interference ; so he left him with this message : ‘Well, do as you like, and take the consequences. You are the high priest of the devil ; and while you are sinning, I will go to the chapel and pray for you.’ He prayed for this man publicly, and called him ‘the high priest of the devil ;’ and when he went to preach at the same town again some time afterwards, he found that his prayers were answered and the man had been converted.

Thus he mingled among the people, and became intimate with them, and studied their habits and modes of thought, and used all the hints and information he gathered to help him in his work and increase his success. He reconnoitred both in the camp of the enemy and among the soldiers of Christ. By his ready wit, and fluent tongue, and generous hand, and kindly, genial spirit, he got the people to attend his services and take an interest in his work.

It would be a wonder if any man failed to secure a congregation, who worked with such ability and tact and skill and patience.

CHAPTER IX.

A RAID ON A HUSH SHOP.

ONE Sunday morning, while he was staying at my house, we left home together about ten o'clock, and started on our way to chapel. He slipped his arm in mine, and as we had plenty of time we walked slowly along, chatting as we went. He carried a few tracts and leaflets in his pocket, and spoke to every person he met, and invited them to the service.

He met a group of young men evidently bent on Sabbath-breaking, and very kindly invited them to chapel. As they declined to go, he warned them of their folly and sin, and told them they would find the way of transgressors very hard. Then he gave them a text of Scripture each, and asked them to commit it to memory.

He had a cheery word and a kindly invitation for everybody, as he distributed his tracts and leaflets and texts of Scripture.

Suddenly, without a word to me about his intentions, he withdrew his arm from mine, and abruptly turned down a narrow passage almost blocked up by waggons and carts and farming implements; but he found his way easily across a back-yard, and entered a cottage. I had passed the place hundreds of times, but had never noticed the quaint old house, with its leaden diamond-shaped window frames and its nicely sanded floor. It was in such a quiet nook that I was surprised he could find it; and as he had left me so abruptly, I followed him to learn the object of his visit.

It proved to be a ‘hush shop,’ where ale was sold without a licence and during the hours of Sunday-closing. About a dozen men were seated round a long table, smoking and drinking. He marched boldly up to the end of the table near the

door, and, with his heavy walking-stick in his hand, said in a commanding voice : ‘Come with me to the Wesleyan chapel ; my Master has sent me to call you to His service.’ Then he paused, and waited for a reply ; but, as no one spoke, down came his walking-stick on the table, and made the mugs and glasses dance again. ‘Down on your knees, every one of you,’ said he. Still they moved not ; so he began to pray after this fashion :

‘Lord, I have called them, but they will not obey. As they will not come to Thee, do Thou in mercy visit them.’ Then, putting his stick on the man’s shoulder nearest him, he said, ‘Lord, save this poor drunkard. Some of these days he will fall under the horses’ feet and be crushed to death under the cart wheels, and will find himself in hell. Nothing but Thy great mercy can save him from a drunkard’s grave. Lord, save him now !’

This man was the village carrier, and often his horses had found their way home from a neighbouring town to their own stable door, and left him drunk and asleep by the roadside. Often he had fallen asleep among the parcels in the cart, and it was a work of considerable difficulty to drag his helpless form into the house. As this extraordinary prayer was being offered, he glanced at the door, and would have given his last sixpence if he could have escaped ; but Mr. Marsden’s bulky form blocked the doorway. He heaved a sigh of relief when the stick moved from his shoulders to the next man.

The prayer for the next man was to this effect : ‘Great God, save this swearing man ! He takes Thy name in vain ; he cannot talk without swearing ; every other word is an oath ; he is sinking down to hell as fast as time can carry him. Save him, Lord !’ The man seemed thunderstruck and confounded. He moved uneasily and cast furtive glances round on his companions, and then at the door. It was evident the preacher had sketched his character to the life ; for some of his companions nodded their assent and smiled, while the victim himself alternately blushed and turned pale, as this terrible revelation was made.

The stick was moved to the third man’s shoulders, and there came a prayer : ‘Lord, save this poor gaol-bird ! He has been

hunted like a partridge for his sins ! He has been a poacher and a thief, but Thou canst save him. Lord, seek him and save him now !' This man was the most notorious gaol-bird in the village. He had been out of prison long enough to allow his hair to grow, so there was nothing remarkable in his dress and appearance. But he was well known as a poacher and a thief, and was constantly under the surveillance of the police. His face was livid with rage, but he was so taken by surprise that he knew not how to act ; so he resigned himself to his fate, doubtless consoling himself with the thought that he was getting no more than his share ; for the preacher was dealing out his denunciations with the utmost impartiality.

The fourth was a young man of sallow complexion and shabby-genteel appearance ; and when the stick reached his shoulder, he trembled visibly. 'Lord, have mercy on this young prodigal ! He has left a pious home, and godly parents, and kind friends ; and here he is reaping the wages of sin. He has lost his character, and his peace of mind, and his best friends, and soon he will lose all chance of heaven. Save him ! Save him !' cried the preacher.

There was a shudder and a groan from the victim, that confirmed the truth of the preacher's words ; and his comrades cast glances of mingled astonishment and approval of the preacher's conduct.

Still the stick went round the table, resting on each man's shoulder in order ; and the preacher gibbeted each man's besetting sin, and sketched his character to the life. How he gained his information about the place, and how he knew the men, are mysteries that I have never been able to solve. Certainly I never told him, and I do not know who had any opportunity of doing so.

There was no escape for the men. They were caught red-handed, breaking the law in drinking on unlicensed premises, and during prohibited hours. The preacher did not give any of them the chance to escape ; for he looked each man steadily in the eyes, and prayed with his own eyes open. He watched every movement, and noted every sigh and glance and groan, as though he read the secrets of their hearts.

When he had finished this strange service, he resumed his journey to the chapel, as though nothing had happened. He had been keeping his congregation waiting about ten minutes beyond the usual time ; but in his opening prayer he pleaded eloquently for the drunken revellers who were at that moment desecrating the Sabbath.

I am not aware that he told anybody where he had been or what he had been doing. The circumstances of his visit to the hush shop were so peculiar that the men could not keep their own counsel. They told their friends about this extraordinary preacher, and it was matter of common conversation for the rest of the day. It is no wonder therefore that the police were making very diligent inquiries about the house before the night was over.

The drunkards blamed me for revealing their hiding-place to the preacher, and furnishing him with information as to their histories, and peculiarities, and habits ; and they would not believe me when I assured them I had never said a word to him on the subject. I was as much amazed as any of them at the accuracy, power, and pathos of his prayers. If he had known them all his life, he could not have described them more perfectly.

The men were so annoyed at this exposure, and the amusement it caused the general public, that they were anxious to vent their indignation upon him by interrupting his services. But though they were loud in talk, and collectively brave enough to suggest severe measures against him, they were individually afraid of him. They had had such revelations from him as gave them a wholesome dread of his tongue. They would think twice before any of them encountered him again.

On the following evening they were sitting smoking and drinking in the ‘snug’ of a well-known public-house, and discussing their adventures at the hush shop on the Sunday, when he appeared opposite the window, and commenced an open-air service with a few of his friends. A notorious character, who had not been at the hush shop, was deputed to attack him publicly, while they gave him their countenance and support. The man began by interrupting the service,

asking questions of an infidel character, ridiculing religion, and reviling the Methodists. He was met by two or three staggering truths that fairly knocked his self-confidence out of him ; and then he lost his temper and made use of the vilest language. Mr. Marsden said : ‘ Friends, let us pray for this poor fellow. O Lord, have mercy on this bad husband ! He has broken one woman’s heart, and almost killed another. He is not fit for any decent woman to live with ; and now he comes forth as the champion of infidelity and sin. O Lord, save this “ frog of the devil,” this bad husband, this wicked man.’ But before the prayer was ended the objector found the place too hot for him and prudently departed. I did not know till some time afterwards that he had worried his first wife to death by his wickedness, and was divorced from his second wife ; but these facts lend additional importance to that remarkable prayer. I afterwards asked Mr. Marsden why he called the man a ‘ frog of the devil ;’ and he referred me to Rev. xvi. 13 for an explanation, though he added that the passage was the inspiration of the moment and exactly suited the case.

On the following evening the drunkards had some difficulty in finding another champion. As we were singing in the street, they were drinking in an adjoining public-house. One of the ringleaders said to an impulsive, reckless young fellow in the room : ‘ Tom, tha dare not go an hearken to yon felly praychin. If tha does, tha’ll get converted ! ’ Tom said : ‘ If tha’ll pay for a gallon o’ ale, I’ll go.’ The ale was paid for, and consumed by the company, and after our preliminary service in the street was over he followed us to chapel. He took a back-seat under the gallery near the door, intending to keep up a running fire of opposition as long as he prudently could, and then retreat. But the preacher spied him, and I fancy he recognised him as one of his friends from the ‘ hush shop ;’ for he soon brought him prominently before the congregation in his prayers after this fashion :

‘ O Lord, save that young man by the door. He is a gambler and spendthrift, and will soon drift away to a

drunkard's hell, if Thy hand does not save him to-night. He promised his sainted father he would meet him in glory ; and he promised his pious mother that he would follow her to heaven. But he has forgotten his promises, and is like the prodigal, far from home and peace.'

So the life and character of poor Tom were sketched in that prayer, till the arrow of conviction was driven deeply into his soul. He fairly roared for mercy, and two or three of his companions followed his example. They spoiled an admirable sermon that night, but they gave us a most successful prayer-meeting.

Among those who followed us to the chapel were a number of navvies. They had been attracted by the commotion and uproar in the street, and doubtless expected some excitement at the service. They had more than they expected, for the power of God came like a second Pentecost, and they began to cry for mercy. One of them, a rough, brutal fellow, who was seldom sober, and who seldom spoke without oaths and curses, looked up into the preacher's face, and with tears in his eyes said, 'Master, pray for me.'

'No,' said he, 'pray for yourself.'

'I can't,' said the poor penitent.

'But you must,' said the preacher.

'What must I say?' he asked.

'Tell the Lord how bad you have been,' was the answer.

'O Lord, I have been a bonny'—and then he used some words more forcible than polite ; but they were the best words in his vocabulary to express his sincere penitence and deep contrition.

He was soundly converted, and joined Tom and several of his old companions in Christian fellowship and evangelistic work.

The 'hush shop' was closed, and the public-house lost some of its old supporters ; for they became total abstainers and consistent members of Society.

Two or three new Society classes were formed, and considerable additions were made to the other classes, as the results of this raid.

There was a genuine revival of religion throughout the place, and all churches and congregations caught the infection. To use the words of a poor old woman at a love-feast afterwards: ‘The Lord had been makkin’ new uns, un mending t’owd uns.’

CHAPTER X.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

My adventures at the hush shop set me thinking. I had seen and heard a great deal about evangelistic work, but I had never seen such a display of intuitive knowledge as Mr. Marsden seemed to possess.

But I had other opportunities of observing this marvellous power in connection with a children's service in our schoolroom.

He began by asking a few simple questions about their playthings, and toys, and games at school; and rewarded each child that answered him intelligently with a piece of butter-scotch or a small coin.

He pictured the boys at play with their marbles, and the girls with their skipping-ropes. Then he pictured them at school, working their sums; and showed how easy it was to cheat and deceive. He brought home to them gradually the truth that all have sinned and need a Saviour.

Having reached this point and carried his audience with him, he soon taught them that Christ was willing and waiting to save sinners. And ere long the butter-scotch, and the talk about marbles and shuttlecock and home lessons, gave place to the tear of penitence and the cry for mercy. He spoke with such tenderness and pathos that all hearts were moved, and teachers and scholars began individually to pray.

He called on me to pray, and set me to work among the penitents. As he moved about the schoolroom, he seemed to know the secret thoughts of every heart.

Taking a boy about thirteen years of age by the hand, he led him to the penitent form, saying as he went: 'Lord, bless

this fatherless lad ! His father was a faithful servant of Thine, but Thou hast taken him to heaven, and left this lad in charge of his widowed mother. He wants to follow his father's example, and find his way to glory. Lord, save him. Save him now !'

Putting his hand on a young girl's head, he said : 'Lord, save this dear girl ! She has a drunken father and a wretched home. Her mother is gone home to heaven long ago, and she is left to poverty and hardship. O God, visit their home, and save the drunken father and the poor child, for Christ's sake. Amen.'

And so he went through the school, describing the characters, circumstances, and surroundings of the children so accurately that they regarded him with almost superstitious awe and reverence.

After the service we had a walk and a long conversation together. I questioned him very minutely and closely about his remarkable utterances at the children's service. I said, 'How did you know that boy's father was dead ? or that his mother was living ? or that his father was a godly man ? How did you know that girl had a drunken father ? or that her mother was dead ? or that she had a miserable home ?' He smiled at my cross-examination and hesitated to reply. But I was resolute and would have an answer. At first he put me off by asking if the statements he had made were true, and I assured him that he had not made a single mistake, as I knew their family histories thoroughly. He assured me that he had made no private inquiries from any one about the children, but all he had said had been from impressions made upon his mind at the time by the Spirit of God. Then he told me that the intuitive knowledge he had displayed was the same power that existed in the prophets of the old dispensation, but to a less degree. He could not fully explain it, and often he was at a loss to harmonise it with his own experience ; and whenever my questions became inconveniently close, he shut me up by reminding me that 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.'

In answer to one of my questions he stated that when he

was in business, a customer one day came into his shop, and paid his account and gave a large order for new goods. Something seemed to say to him at the time: ‘This man will never pay you for these goods.’ He said to himself: ‘The man has been a good customer to me, and always has paid me hitherto. I cannot find any good reason for doubting his honesty now, and I shall be obliged to trust him once more.’ The goods were delivered, and a few weeks afterwards the man fled to America, taking with him all he could turn into cash, and leaving no assets behind. The goods were never paid for, and Mr. Marsden’s intuitive knowledge in this case did not save him from a serious financial loss.

During our conversation he told me that while he was preaching, the Spirit of God would often say to him, ‘Go speak to that man,’ as distinctly as He said to Philip in the desert, ‘Go join thyself to his chariot.’ I call to mind many such scenes in the life of Mr. Marsden.

A rather showy and demonstrative local preacher attended his services, and made himself very prominent in the work. He put his hand on the young man’s shoulder, and said: ‘Take care; you have got the devil’s mark on your forehead.’ Those who heard him were grieved and sorry, and in their hearts condemned him for speaking so harshly of the young man. But the prophecy was true. That young man was a consummate hypocrite. He absconded shortly afterwards, leaving his young wife and family, and migrated to Salt Lake City, and became a Mormon. I believe he is there to this day.

Mr. Marsden often uttered strange predictions from the pulpit when he was preaching with the greatest solemnity and power.

One Sunday evening he was preaching in a crowded chapel, from the words, ‘I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.’ He worked up his congregation to a high pitch of excitement and enthusiasm, and then began asking: ‘Who will accept this cup of salvation?’ One, and another, and another, in various parts of the chapel, responded: ‘I will.’ ‘Hallelujah!’ he exclaimed. ‘Now those who mean to have this cup of salvation, stand up.’

The whole congregation rose, except one young woman who

sat in a front pew of the side gallery. Turning to her, he said: ‘Young woman, stand up. In God’s name I ask you to take the cup of salvation to-night. It may be your last opportunity.’ She was angry, and pushed her way out of the pew, and along the crowded passages in the gallery on her way to the street, amid the breathless attention and anxious solicitude of the whole congregation. As she struggled to escape, he called after her again: ‘Young woman, stop in God’s name; I have a message for you. If you go out of this chapel unconverted, you will die in your sins. I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but you are going the way to ruin your reputation, and destroy your own soul, and wreck your family. If you are alive this day twelve months, the Lord has not spoken by me.’

This address made a profound impression on the congregation, but she heeded it not, as she hurried down the stairs and ran into the street. She was well known as the daughter of a respectable tailor and woollen-draper in the town, and the words of the preacher proved to be prophetic. In two or three months her father failed in business, and the home was broken up. The shock killed his wife, and he sank under his misfortunes and died a few weeks afterwards. The young woman sought to drown her sorrows in drink, and soon became a profligate and an outcast. She lived for a few months a life of sin and shame, and died a miserable and loathsome death in less than twelve months.

During one of his visits to Lancashire he was entertained by one of the leading Methodists in the Circuit. This gentleman had a considerable number of young men in his employ, who resided on the premises. Soon after his arrival on the Saturday night, Mr. Marsden gathered these young men together for spiritual conversation and counsel. Then he prayed with them, and told them he wanted to see every one of them converted before he went away. They all promised to attend the services, as often as they had opportunity, except two of them, who said: ‘Now, Mr. Marsden, we have the greatest respect for you personally, but we do not believe in your work, and we do not mean to come to the services.’

All the rest were converted in the course of the following week, and he was determined to have these two. So he met them one morning in a joking humour, and said: ‘Now the Lord has saved all your comrades, and He would have saved you if you had only been willing to come to the services. I know the reason of your absence: it is because you dare not come.’ This was too much for them. They could stand a good deal, but to be told publicly before their shopmates that they dared not go to chapel to hear a sermon was more than they could bear. Out of sheer bravado they were compelled to go that night.

He saw them in the congregation, and he told the Lord some strange things about them in his prayer, and asked the prayers of the congregation for them. At the close of the sermon he announced a prayer-meeting, and while they were singing the last hymn he went to the chapel door, and allowed nobody to go home without challenging him. A servant girl came and said, ‘Please, Mr. Marsden, I promised my mistress I would be home at half-past eight.’ ‘Good girl,’ said he, ‘go home and keep your promise. The Lord bless you.’

Having cut off the escape of the two obstinate ones, he saw they were delivered into his hands, and would be compelled for the sake of their reputation to stay the prayer-meeting, and brave it out. They would have given anything if they could have left the chapel without exposing themselves to charges of cowardice and want of spirit.

While the prayer-meeting was being held, he went to them, and one of them said: ‘Now, Mr. Marsden, it is of no use coming here to talk to us about religion. Nothing you can say will make the slightest impression on us. We are only come because you dared us to come, and we are staying the prayer-meeting to let you see we are not afraid of anything you can say or do.’ Then he turned upon them like one of the fiery prophets of old, and said: ‘The day of your opportunity has come. It is high tide with you, and if you don’t raise your anchors and set sail to-day, you never will. If you are not converted now, you will die in a prison or a poorhouse. I may not live to see it, but if you should either of you get to

a prison or a poorhouse while I live, send for me to Doncaster, and I will come to see you.'

Then, turning to one of them, he reminded him of his early religious privileges, of his praying father and pious mother and godly surroundings, and asked him how long he intended to kick against the pricks. After a fearful struggle that young man went to the penitent form, and sought and found mercy. He became a devoted Christian, and is now a Wesleyan minister.

Turning to the other young man, he said: 'I am not so much surprised at your conduct. You were never taught to think highly of religion, and you have been accustomed to treat it with contempt. You may fool me, and trifle with my message ; but don't you trifle with my Master.'

The young man resisted and defied him to the last. His old employer told me he was a splendid business man, and might have had a most successful career ; but, shortly after the visit of Mr. Marsden, he took offence at some trifles and gave up his situation. He got drunk, and in a wild freak enlisted as a soldier. His troop passed through Doncaster and spent a night there. He primed himself with drink, and went to Mr. Marsden's house to tell him he was a false prophet, for he had not gone to the devil yet. Mr. Marsden was not at home, but he left a message with the servant with his name and address. Shortly afterwards he was convicted and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, and I have heard quite recently that he died in prison, thus literally fulfilling Mr. Marsden's prediction.

It would be very easy to multiply instances of solemn public warnings, uttered by Mr. Marsden to impenitent sinners, being fulfilled to the letter. But I have given a few examples that are sufficiently diversified to enable the reader to form a clear idea of their general character. The question will be asked: 'How did he gain the information on which he based his statements ?'

i. He was a keen student of human nature. He could read the looks and deportment and faces and forms of men. He understood a blush, a leer, a look, a sigh ; and to him most

men were books to be read and studied. He has seen hidden gems in unconverted men that nobody else saw, and has dug them up and polished them. One of his earliest spiritual children was a youth in whom he saw great promise, and he resolved to bring him out. The youth became a successful local preacher and emigrated to Australia. He prospered in business, made a fortune, rose to rank and social position in the colony, was elected a member of the Legislature, took high office in the Ministry, and became one of the foremost men in the country.

This is but one example out of many that show his power of reading character.

2. He was a shrewd observer of men and things. He could reason from cause to effect almost instinctively. If he saw to what point of the compass men were steering, he would almost infallibly tell them at what port they would arrive. He believed that God's moral laws were as fixed and reliable as His physical laws ; and if he could only have one glance into men's seed-baskets, he would tell them what the harvest would be. Nothing escaped his eyes and ears. He prayed with his eyes open ; for he believed it was his duty to watch as well as pray. He was quick to detect by a word or accent any clue that would give him information. He heard a man utter one word in his prayer that was peculiar to the Roman Catholic liturgy, and went away saying : 'That man is a pious Catholic.' The people standing by wondered how he knew, but he had something else to do just then than explain such trifles to his friends.

3. He was a holy man, and the secret of the Lord was with him. He was mighty in prayer, and in intimate communion with heaven. He lived within speaking distance of God's throne daily, and prayed without ceasing. I have heard him say he could come down from the pulpit after preaching, and go round the chapel, and pick out almost every unconverted man and woman in the place ; and I have seen him do it again and again. Sometimes the Spirit would say to him, 'Go and speak to that man.' As he was riding on a turnpike road one day, he saw a young gentleman farmer in a field alone,

and this message came to him. He dismounted, and tied his horse to the gate, and went into the field to talk to the stranger. They spoke for a few moments about the weather, and the prospects of the harvest, and general subjects. Then he made a powerful appeal to the young gentleman about the value of his soul, and pointed him to Jesus, and entreated him to get ready for eternity. He then knelt down among the grass, and earnestly pleaded with God for the young farmer's conversion. As he took his leave of him, he charged him to meet him in heaven.

Years afterwards he was in another part of England conducting special services, when a stranger came and grasped him warmly by the hand, and thanked him for kind services done to him long ago.

'Where did you see me?' inquired Mr. Marsden; 'I have no recollection of you.'

'Do you recollect tying your horse to a gate-post, and praying with a young man in a field?' the stranger asked.

'Yes, I remember it now you name it,' said he.

'I was that young man; and after you had prayed with me, I did not rest until I obtained salvation; and now I am preaching the Gospel to others.'

Then they cordially shook hands once more, and shouted, 'Hallelujah!'

Sometimes he ignored or disregarded some of these impressions and inferences, and brought himself into condemnation. I remember once seeing him in great distress through having set up his own judgment in opposition to what he believed to be the will of the Lord. He was invited to conduct special services in a neighbouring town. I fully intended spending the Sunday with him, and giving him what countenance and help I could, but was detained by pressing engagements at home. On the following Tuesday morning I received a note from him, asking me to come over at once and see him. I found him in great mental anguish and distress. He greeted me very cordially, and with tears in his eyes said: 'Taylor, tell me what is the matter with this place. I make no impression on the people, and am doing no good here. I shall go to

Doncaster to-morrow.' I said : 'Such nonsense ! You must do no such thing ! • You must tarry here till you do make an impression on the people.' 'Well,' said he, 'do tell me what is the matter with the place. It breaks my heart to go on like this. I cannot get the members to attend our services ; they leave all the responsibility on me, and I am doing nothing.' I told him that the Methodists in the town were strong enough to carry all before them, and revolutionise the place, if they only knew it. I compared them to a sleeping giant, whose strength had never been tried ; but I predicted that if they could only be roused to effort, they would astonish the people. 'Are they divided among themselves and jealous of each other?' he asked. I said : 'You have about hit the mark. We have numerically a fine regiment, but they are all officers. We want some private soldiers, and the only way to rouse this place is to go out and enlist some raw recruits. The members here are absolutely rusting and spoiling for want of work. They have had so much of the parade-ground and the drill-sergeant that some of them have deserted. If they could only smell powder and be hurled into the thick of the battle, they would quit themselves like men.'

He listened very carefully, and weighed well the words, and after tea we went out into the market-place and held an open-air service. We gathered a good congregation and took them to chapel. He preached to the outcast and abandoned, and had what I called 'a good time.' It was not a good time to him, but everybody else in the chapel felt it good to be there. At the prayer-meeting we had several penitents, but the leaders of the Society in the town were conspicuous by their absence. There was not the least tinge of bitterness in his manner as he remarked to me : 'Taylor, the Lord can do without the best of us when He is busy. And if they don't come to help us, He will send somebody else.' Singularly enough we had a number of leaders and local preachers from the Primitive Methodist and New Connexion and Methodist Free Church congregations in the town, who had gathered round us in the market-place and followed us to the service. These entered heart and soul into the revival work, and caught the infection

of his earnestness and zeal, and carried the fire to their own congregations. So far as his visit related to our own Church and people in that town, it was a miserable failure, and its results were injurious, because it led to recrimination and fault-finding and bickering among those who came not up to the help of the Lord. But I believe he lighted a candle in the sister Churches that has been shining ever since in some hearts. I know some of their leaders and local preachers picked up an idea or two from him that they turned to good account in after years.

He not only accepted invitations he ought to have declined, but he sometimes was mistaken in his judgments of men. He was now and then caught tripping rather seriously when he spoke unadvisedly with his lips; but in the great majority of cases he was right in his estimates and sound in his judgment.

He could not always give a satisfactory reason for the opinions he formed or the statements he made; but he ‘trusted in the Lord with all his heart,’ and leaned less than most men to his own understanding. He feared the Lord, and proved the truth of the promise: ‘The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.’

CHAPTER XI.

CATCHING MEN.

THE cunning hunter who pursues wild beasts to the jungle, and having once found a trail follows it successfully to the end, must have a thorough knowledge of the character, and habits, and modes of life of the animals he seeks. The successful angler who always returns with a heavy basket of fish must know the places they frequent, and the food that pleases them best, and the baits that are most tempting, and the habits and peculiarities of the different members of the finny tribe. So the successful evangelist must have a thorough knowledge of human nature, and must study the characters, and habits, and modes of thought of the men he seeks to save, and must put forth his utmost skill and effort if he would catch men.

It is interesting to study the methods Mr. Marsden adopted in his work. We may not always approve of his plans and expedients, but they were the result of wide experience, and in his hands they were remarkably successful.

I. He found it difficult to get near the people he wanted.

The very people he came to seek and save did their best to keep out of his way. Frequently, when he commenced his mission services, the chapel would be filled with converted men and women, members and adherents of the Church, and they would sit in solemn silence listening to the most impressive sermon. This would satisfy some men, but it stung him to the quick if the unconverted kept out of range.

One Sunday morning he preached in one of our fashionable chapels to a congregation composed almost entirely of members of Society. He charmed them with the simplicity and power of his language, the clearness and beauty of his illustrations,

and the pungency and power of his appeals ; and they were just thinking this could never be the revivalist preacher they had heard so much about, when he suddenly stopped and closed the Bible abruptly. ‘The devil is in the chapel,’ he exclaimed. ‘I can’t preach. Let us pray !’ Down on his knees he fell, and prayed for the Sabbath-breaker, and the drunkard, and the thief, and the profligate, and the abandoned, with such earnestness and power that his hearers trembled and became terribly excited. They went home at noon and told their friends what a charming piece of a sermon they had had, and how suddenly the preacher had gone mad in the pulpit.

After service he went into the lowest public-houses, and among the shops that were open on Sunday, and to the groups of Sabbath-breakers, and preached and prayed till he had fairly roused the neighbourhood.

When the hour of the evening service arrived, the chapel was packed with an excited crowd who were unaccustomed to attend any place of worship. He preached to the outcast and abandoned, and had scores of them in penitence and tears at the prayer-meeting. The respectable members of Society, who had had their morning sermon spoiled, did not understand his vagaries at all ; but he knew exactly what he was doing, and was delighted that his stratagem succeeded so well. He had got the unconverted within range, and he would take care they did not escape.

One of his most successful traps for catching men was his power over the children. He believed that if you want to get at the hearts of the fathers and mothers, you must try to win the little ones. Hence he went into the Sunday-school, and gained their affections and sympathy, and enlisted them into his service. He went into the playgrounds and streets and lanes, and invited all the boys and girls to come and help him to sing at the services.

He organised orange-feasts and apple-feasts for the children, but the oranges and apples were the baits he used to catch them with. He would buy a few hundred oranges, or a few baskets of apples, and send them round the school by the teachers, with strict orders that each child should take one, but

they were not to eat it till he told them. When they were all served, he would make them hold up the oranges so that he could see them. Then looking at the large quantity left, he would ask what should be done with them. If there were a sick brother or sister at home who could not come to the feast, he would propose that an orange be sent to them. This would be carried by a show of hands. Then he would suggest that the remainder be sent to the babies at home, or to the sick people in the infirmary and hospital. Thus he would enlist their sympathy for others, and appeal to their generosity and love. Then he would give a stirring address, full of touching and tender appeals to the children to give their hearts to God ; and they would be so interested that they would slip their oranges into their pockets, and listen with bated breath and tearful eyes.

Often he would turn the orange-feast into a prayer-meeting, and have such scenes of penitence and prayer as would never be forgotten. Children of tender years were as much under his influence as adults, and were as quick to understand the plan of salvation ; and many of them were converted through his ministry.

After one of his orange-feasts the children would rally round him at every service, and they became his most successful helpers. They brought their parents and friends and companions to chapel, and distributed his handbills, and helped him to sing at his open-air mission services ; and many of them became his spiritual children.

Another of his expedients was dividing the ranks of the enemy. Like a daring general who finds the enemy too strong for him when united, he often succeeded in sowing dissension among them, and breaking them up into hostile camps, and so defeating them both. In street-preaching he always gained the ears of the lowest classes, and generally contrived to say something that would sting a few of them to the quick. They would resent his remarks with some warmth, and perhaps lose their tempers, and try to put him down. Then he would assume an air of injured innocence, and appeal to the well-known love of fair play that is to be found among Englishmen.

He would not be put down, and he would have the sympathy and support of the majority of his hearers ; and if the malcontents did not like it, they could go home. But he knew right well they would not go home ; for he had broken them up into two camps—those who were in his favour, and those who were against him. And when he marched to the chapel for service, one party would go to protect him and see fair play, and the other party would go to annoy him. So this piece of strategy succeeded to perfection. He did not care what motives brought them to the service, so long as he got them there. He knew right well that as soon as they were seated in the pews, and he was in the pulpit, they were caught in a trap, and the Lord would deliver them into his hands.

Then he would fall upon friends and foes alike, and with consummate skill and marvellous success he would preach the Gospel, and win many souls. But his surest way of catching men was going out into the highways and hedges and compelling them to come in. Wherever men gathered together, there he would surely go. During dinner-hour he would visit the factory and the foundry and the forge, and give a lecture on ‘The Dignity of Labour,’ or ‘Strikes and Lock-outs,’ or some other popular subject, for about twenty minutes ; then he would pray with them, and invite them to the service in the evening.

II. *He found it difficult to get people to think.*

If he could get near the people, he would make them listen, and he would make them understand what he had to say. But too often men will listen to the most impressive and eloquent sermons with all the marks of pleasure and approval, and yet allow the truth to go in at one ear and out at the other. They go away and forget what they have heard, and are neither wiser nor better for the preacher’s efforts. He had a firm conviction that the more he tried to please such hearers, the less good he would be likely to effect. If his sermons must do any good, they must ‘bite.’ Somebody charged him with preaching sermons intended to please and captivate and charm his hearers, but, like the sermons of other men, producing no striking results. He said : ‘I plead guilty. I have

preached sermons full of flowers and waxworks. They are very pretty, but they do nobody any good. If the good Lord will forgive me this time, I will never do it again. In future I will put as many cats, and dogs, and lions, and tigers, into my sermons as I can. They shall have teeth and claws, and I will make them both scratch and bite.'

His critics were often terribly severe with him for his plainness and pungency, and the directness of his personal appeals. In reply to their hostile criticisms he said : ' Backsliding Israel wanted "smooth things," and the gentlemen of those days thought the prophet a coarse rough fellow. But the prophet belonged to the salvation army, and the gentlemen ill-used and persecuted him. The rich persecutors and the false prophets belonged to the damnation army.'

Holding such opinions as these, it is no wonder that he offended many. A young local preacher said to me : ' I was terribly annoyed at him for praying publicly for my conversion, and mentioning me in the pulpit by name. I went out of the chapel in a rage, and vowed I would never enter it again. But his prayers were stronger than my will ; for I came again a night or two afterwards and surrendered my heart to Christ. I not only forgave him for insulting me, but thanked him for being so faithful and plain with me.'

He believed that if he could set men thinking, he could do them good. Hence many of his most wild and random expressions were intended as thought-provokers. He said to one young woman : ' You have got the marks of death upon you.' She was terribly alarmed, thinking he meant she would die in a very short time, and went at once and made her peace with God. He simply meant that she was clad in mourning, and ought to be reminded by the death of friends that she too must die. He rejoiced that she had repented of her sins, and gave her spiritual counsel and help.

Thus many of his most extraordinary expressions were uttered for the purpose of awakening thought and reflection and inquiry.

I have known him walk up to a group of idlers in the street, and ask one of them if he could spell. Then he would point

to the fingers of his right hand, and say, ‘ R-I-G-H-T ;’ and then to the fingers of his left hand, and say, ‘ W-R-O-N-G.’ When he had got some of them to spell the words, he would say, ‘ Now, lads, which is it you are taking ?—the right or the wrong path ?’ No matter how ignorant or stupid his hearers might be, he would draw them into conversation, and get them to express their opinions, and perhaps have a lively and humorous discussion with them. Then he would turn upon them, and out of their own mouths he would condemn them, and give them two or three Gospel truths which they would never forget.

Sometimes he would go to such a group of idlers with this question : ‘ Could you find a better place for your nose than where it is ?’ One of them would suggest one place, and another a different one ; but he would always find some fatal objection to their schemes, and prove that God was right and they were wrong. Having drawn them into conversation, and got them to think, he would prove that God’s laws are always in the right, and sinners are always in the wrong. Then he would teach them a short prayer, and perhaps say something that would lead them to repentance and a better life.

He went into one of the forges at Thorncliffe, near Sheffield, at noon, to address the workmen, and found that one of the furnaces was being cooled down for repairs. The workmen were very courteous to him, and asked him to ascend a ladder and look into the mass of fire that was dying out under the cooling process. When he came down the ladder, the men gathered round him for conversation. He began by telling them that ‘ hell was hotter than that furnace,’ and warning them of the guilt and danger of those who would not repent and accept the Saviour. Then he knelt down among the slag and cinders and ashes, and fervently prayed that God would save every workman from sin, and cleanse his heart, and make him fit for heaven.

There was a fiddler at Skelmanthorpe who used to attend the chapel and fiddle for the choir. He assumed a position of authority in the place, though he was not a member of Society,

and had no right to interfere in matters belonging to the Church. As he could not get his own way, and the members of Society gave him to understand that they could get on very well without him, unless he would be more amiable, he took offence and left the chapel. He went to the public-houses, and began to fiddle for the amusement of the public. One day Mr. Marsden met him in the street, looked him straight in the face, and said : ‘Take care you don’t fiddle yourself into hell.’ Not another word was spoken ; but that message was a barbed arrow that flew straight to the poor fiddler’s conscience. He never forgot it to his dying day. It set him thinking so seriously about his condition, that he came to a better mind and began to lead a better life.

I have observed that in many parts of the country Mr. Marsden is remembered by some people only on account of the odd expressions he used, or the extraordinary things he did. Events that occurred thirty or forty years ago are still fresh in men’s memories, and I have spoken to many who saw only the humorous and grotesque side of his remarks, and never could see beneath the surface. Most of his random statements must be looked upon as we should regard a bow drawn at a venture ; and just as the arrow shot at random found its way to Ahab’s body through the joints of his armour, so many of his light playful words were winged by the Holy Spirit and resulted in the conversion of sinners.

He was full of fun and as playful as a kitten, but he had always a pure motive and a good intention ; and he has joked and teased many a man into a better life, who could not be brought to sober thought and reflection in any other way.

III. *He found it difficult to bring people to decision for Christ.*

Often, when he had explained and enforced the truth so powerfully that people acknowledged the claims of God, and admitted they ought to serve Him, he was met by indifference or opposition. He used to say he did not care so much for the devil of opposition ; he often did him good when he thought he was doing him harm. But the devil of indifference was a formidable foe ; and when he encountered him, there would be some stirring times.

At one of his revival services was a young lady who was engaged to be married to a young and promising local preacher. She was unconverted, and he had offended her by speaking strongly of the evil consequences arising from Christians marrying the unconverted. He went to her in the prayer-meeting, and pointed out the duty of making her peace with God, and affectionately and earnestly implored her to surrender herself to Christ. Finding her obstinate and unyielding, he said, ‘Then you shall not have that local preacher.’ This was too much for her dignity. She flew into a great rage, rushed out of the pew, and marched down the aisle to leave the chapel; but before she reached the door, the Spirit of God arrested her. With a wild cry she fell on the floor, and when they picked her up they found her broken-hearted and contrite, and crying for mercy. They took her to the communion rail, and she obtained pardon and became a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. She not only forgave him for the severe measures he took with her, but she and her husband in after years held him in high esteem and affection.

Some of his methods of catching men and bringing them to decision were highly amusing.

While he was conducting revival services at Newark, a youth put his head inside the door, to hear what was going on. This lad had a shock of curly hair that arrested Mr. Marsden’s attention. Presently he walked down the aisle to the door, and spoke kindly to the lad, and invited him to come in. As he seemed timid and inclined to run away, the preacher laid hold of a handful of curls and held him fast. Then he told him how the Lord Jesus Christ wanted to make a man of him, and the devil wanted to make a fool of him; and urged him to come and seek for mercy. He pleaded with the lad, and gently pulled his curls, till the lad followed his hair and marched up the aisle to the communion rail. The preacher held him by the hair till he had safely deposited him among the penitents. The youth was converted and became a minister in one of the sister Churches, and often tells his friends that ‘Isaac Marsden brought him to Christ by the hair of his head.’

On another occasion he found a little girl weeping bitterly

alone in one of the pews at a prayer-meeting. He took her up under his arm and carried her to the communion rail. There he gently set her down, and talked and prayed with her till her soul was made happy. Years afterwards a lady came up to him at one of his services in a distant part of the country, and asked him if he remembered her. He regretted to say he had forgotten her. Then she asked him if he remembered taking up a little girl under his arm at a certain place, and pointing her to Jesus. He recalled the incident, and expressed his pleasure at meeting her again. She thanked him for his kindness, and assured him that she then filled a situation for which she never would have been fitted but for his zeal and devotion in seeking her salvation.

At Doncaster Mr. Marsden was very anxious about the conversion of a backslider. He had spoken to him repeatedly about his soul, and the man had expressed a desire to come back to the Church, but he could never bring him to decision. At length he heard the man was taking a situation as a bottler in a wine-cellar, and he was afraid that drink might ruin him. Happily he met him in Priory Place one night, just opposite the chapel, and challenged him there and then to instant decision. The man made excuses and wanted to procrastinate, but he seized him by the collar and led him up the chapel yard and carried him into a vestry. Then he locked the door, and induced him to go down on his knees and make a full and complete surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The man was soundly converted, and lived a holy life and died a triumphant death.

In scores of cases he has picked up children and young people in his arms, and gently carried them to the penitent form, and held them till he had induced them to seek for mercy. In some instances he has caught strong men and forced them to their knees by sheer physical strength. But these methods he never approved himself, and would have condemned them in others. If he succeeded in gaining his ends by some droll and novel expedient, he would enjoy a quiet laugh of satisfaction, and perhaps repeat the story afterwards for the amusement of his friends. These eccentricities

are often spoken of as the secret of his power over men, but he had a reserve of strength that could only be seen by a close and thoughtful observer.

1. *He had great moral and spiritual power.* In a remarkable degree he had the 'power of goodness.' Bad men were afraid of him. If he went into slums and courts and alleys that were the abodes of crime and violence, he had a charmed life. If two men attacked or threatened him, there would be sure to be three or four to defend him. I could mention streets where policemen never dare to go alone, but he would go and face the worst of men single-handed. If he put his head inside a public-house on a Saturday night, the ribald song and coarse jest would cease, and his exhortations would be listened to with respect. If a prophet of the old dispensation had been sent to warn men of sin and offer them salvation, he could not have commanded more respectful attention than some of the very worst men gave to Mr. Marsden.

2. *He had practical faith in the power of the truth.* He never preached a sermon that he did not fully endorse. All he said he meant. All he uttered of God's truth he unreservedly accepted and absolutely believed. He never spoke with bated breath or faltering tongue. He preached as if he had been plunged into deepest hell and permitted to see the horrors of the damned, and then lifted to God's throne and been allowed to gaze on all the wonders of heaven. Religion to him was not a mere profession—it was a reality. And when he proclaimed the truth, he expected other people to believe it and accept it. He knew that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and when he preached that Gospel he would have results. So surely as the farmer in the spring-time looks for the springing corn in the place where he sowed his wheat, so surely did he expect to reap what he had sown. So strong was his faith in the power of the truth, that he carried it to the most unlikely places, and produced the most striking results. If a man had sunk so low that he had not a friend in the world, and was mentally, morally, and socially bankrupt, that was the man he would rescue and save. He was specially severe with those Christians

who have a theoretical faith and an orthodox creed, but who yield no fruits and produce no results. These flabby, inarticulate, undemonstrative, neutral people raised his ire and provoked his contempt. They were the loafers in the harvest-field, the camp-followers keeping out of the battle-field, the drones in the hive of the Church, and the parasites that destroy the life they cannot give.

3. *He had wonderful persuasive power.* His mental and moral superiority over most men induced them to look up to him and treat his opinions with respect. There was a certain quiet dignity about him, and an evident consciousness of power, that greatly impressed them. Then he had the art of putting things. He knew just what to say and how to say it. In a brief sentence or two he has put the great truths of the Gospel before a stranger at a prayer-meeting, and in a few moments the stranger has walked up to the communion rail without invitation. I have heard men vow and declare that nothing would ever induce them to go to a penitent form to confess Christ publicly before men; but he has had no difficulty in persuading them to do it. He appealed to the understanding, the judgment, the intellect, the conscience. It has been said that his results were due to excitement, fanaticism, or fear; but there was more of head and heart in his works than his critics gave him credit for. Hence he caught not merely the low, and poor, and degraded; but he lodged in his net some of the finest intellects and most cultivated minds.

CHAPTER XII.

PULPIT POWER.

A STRANGER entering the chapel when Mr. Marsden preached would be struck with his commanding appearance and devout earnestness. When he was in his prime, about ten or fifteen years before his death, he had great power in the pulpit.

He was a little above the medium height, broad-shouldered and muscular, with a slight tendency to corpulence. He had a massive forehead, with all the intellectual and moral faculties fully developed; and, though his hair and beard grew prematurely grey, his complexion was florid, and he seemed to enjoy excellent health.

He would read the verses of the first hymn with great reverence and impressiveness, occasionally giving a brief comment on some particular verse, or emphasizing and enforcing its spirituality of worship. Then he would kneel down, with his body erect and his face uplifted, and begin to pray. His voice was often thick and husky in consequence of the strain and injury he had inflicted upon it in former years; but as he warmed to his work, the hoarseness usually passed away, and his voice became clear, and penetrating, and powerful. He spoke with deliberation and distinctness, so that every syllable and word could be heard and understood. He frequently opened his eyes during prayer, and noted the reverent and earnest worshippers, and kept a strict watch on the lawless intruders who came to disturb the service. His prayers were often individual and personal, and he would sometimes mention the singers, and the organist, and the chapel-keeper. He prayed for every member of the congregation, and for all sorts and conditions of men, and concluded with an eloquent and

impassioned appeal to God for a present blessing on himself and on his hearers. He did not believe in long prayers. He knew what he wanted when he came to the mercy-seat, and he spread his wants before the Lord with childlike simplicity and faith. He would not be denied. He would return to the particular desire of his heart again and again, and he would plead, and entreat, and beseech, and argue his case, till the Lord said to him, ‘Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’ And then his prayer was turned to praise, and he would shout ‘Hallelujah’ till the congregation said ‘Amen.’

This was his first victory during the service. He had gained the ear of the Master. He had conquered his own spirit and roused himself to enthusiasm. He made his hearers shake off their lethargy and indifference, and, to use his own expressive words, ‘it was time for the devil to look out.’

When he came out of the first prayer with colours flying and shouting ‘Hallelujah,’ he was having a good time, and woe to the organist and choir who could not find a tune that would go in harmony with the enthusiasm of the congregation. He would have no plaintive tunes pitched in a minor key when he was in his triumphant career. He would have tunes that everybody could sing, and he would make everybody try to sing. He said it was no use driving the devil out of the pulpit if he let him take refuge in the singing gallery; for he would be giving the ‘Dead March’ when they wanted the doxology. He would not have half a victory, he would have all or none. Sometimes the organist would take offence, and the choir would strike against his interference; but if they would not sing, somebody else would; so he had his own way in the end.

The portion of Scripture read for the lesson usually had some intimate connection with the sermon. It was useless to try to bind him to a regular order of service. If the lesson for the day suited his purpose, he would read it; but if he was about to preach on some subject that was not mentioned in the lesson, he would choose a portion of Scripture that would be of special help to him in his sermon. His running expositions and comments on the lesson were singularly clear, intelligent, and

spiritually helpful to the service. His knowledge of Scripture was evidently wide and deep and varied. I have seen him keep a congregation spell-bound and breathless with interest, as he illustrated some principle, or enforced some duty, or set forth some truth hidden away in some obscure part of the lesson. Ordinary readers would have passed it by unnoticed, but his keen eye saw the hidden gem, and he quickly seized it, and held it up to his delighted hearers. These comments were usually pithy and pointed—just long enough to whet the appetite and make men wish for more.

After another earnest, lively hymn had been sung to a popular tune, the congregation would settle down with evident relish to hear the sermon. He would announce his text, and read it very carefully twice. Then he would plunge at once without apology or preface into his subject. He would arrest the attention of his hearers by his plain and powerful statement of truth, and by his bold and vivid imagery. His sermons were evidently carefully prepared, and full of interesting and profitable matter. He wrote volumes of notes, but they give no idea of his sermons as they were preached. Notes to him were but the bony framework of his sermons: his vivid imagination and ready wit supplied the flesh and skin and clothing. Perhaps the best example of his style is given in the following description of his popular sermon on

THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM.

'And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.'—I Chron. xiii. 14.

He began by telling the congregation that he had travelled ten times from York to Newcastle on the same line of railway. He had looked out of the carriage windows, and enjoyed the varied scenery, and noted every object of interest by the way. But although he had observed things so carefully, he had seen some new subject for admiration and study each journey, and he was sure he had not seen everything yet. Then he went on to tell them that he had gone ten times from Genesis to Revelation, in his private devotions. He had read every chapter

and verse carefully and prayerfully on his knees. Each time he had finished, he flattered himself he knew the Word of God thoroughly. But when he began again, he was sure to find something that had escaped his notice previously. The last journey he took through the Bible, he stumbled on this house of Obed-edom. It was in such an out-of-the-way place that he had not noticed it in his first nine journeys, but this time, as he was passing, he called and introduced himself to Mr. and Mrs. Obed-edom and their eight sons (1 Chron. xxvi. 4, 5). There was nothing very remarkable about the appearance of the house, or its furniture, or its surroundings. But to him it had peculiar charms, for there the ark of God rested for three months. He wanted them to show him the room where it stood, and tell him what it was like, and let him know what sort of a life they lived while the ark of the covenant was sheltered under their humble roof.

So they told him how the ark was on its way from the house of Abinadab, and the oxen fell with the cart. Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark and prevent it from falling, as though God were not able and willing to take care of His own. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and he died beside the ark. The priests lifted the ark from the cart, and carried it reverently into the house, and left it there.

And Mrs. Obed-edom told him how the blessing of the Lord came with the ark. Her husband and her sons used to bow with her before the ark in worship. They obtained the forgiveness of their sins and the favour of God. The Lord blessed them with health and strength, with peace and prosperity. The news of their blessedness was carried to the king's palace, and David fetched the ark to Mount Zion, with songs and dances and universal rejoicings.

But when the ark was removed, the blessing of the Lord remained with them. Their sons grew up strong and virtuous and useful. They were all ‘able men for strength for the service.’ There was not a weakling, nor a fop, nor a fool among them. They were *men*. They honoured their parents, they served their country, and they loved the Lord.

Then came a stirring appeal to the congregation. They were urged there and then to open their doors and admit the ark of the Lord.

I. *The blessedness of family religion was set forth in striking terms.*

1. *The ark of the Lord was a visible witness for Jehovah wherever it went.* To the pious Israelite it was always an object of interest. The two tables of stone containing the ten commandments reminded him of his obligation to know and keep the law of God. The pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded reminded him of God's wise and wondrous providence, and His faithfulness to His promises and to His people. Its mercy-seat was the place of Divine manifestation and glory. It was full of hallowed memories, and appealed to man's highest and purest and holiest aspirations.

So religion in the household was a witness for God everywhere. What would the preacher have been but for the prayers of a sainted mother? In his wildest excesses of folly and sin her prayers were chains and fetters that restrained him more than any power on earth beside. In darkest night and fiercest temptation, one thought of her tender, pleading, prevailing prayers has restrained him when he was blind and deaf to every other call to duty.

And where would some of the congregation have been but for the hallowed memories of the ark in the household? Some of them had fallen very low and sinned most grievously; but they recalled the memories of a family altar, and a sainted father, and a pious mother, and days of happiness and innocence.

He need not argue with them about the blessedness of family religion as a witness for God at all times, or assure them of its influence over every member of the household. He need only appeal to their memories and speak to their consciences.

2. *The ark of the Lord was the dwelling-place of Jehovah.* While it was true that heaven was God's throne and earth His footstool, and He filled heaven and earth with His presence, yet it was also true that the Shechinah expressed the visible

majesty of the Divine presence. It was a symbol of God's presence, and to it came all who sought for mercy and desired to worship Jehovah.

So the altar in the household was the dwelling-place of Jehovah. God said to every devout worshipper: 'Make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell there.' 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them.'

And when Jehovah came to dwell in the household, He wrought miracles of grace and mercy. When father and mother were converted and worshipped at the family altar, the blessing of the Lord came and rested on the family.

There was a striking record given among the genealogies in the Chronicles (1 Chron. xxvi. 4-8). After enumerating the sons and grandsons of Obed-edom, we are told that they were 'all able men for strength for the service.' Physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually they were *men*. The grandest heroes in the world have been the godly men, and they have sprung almost invariably from godly homes. The altar in the household has been the place where they received their religious life and strength. 'The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but He blesseth the habitation of the just.'

II. *The privileges of family religion were next illustrated and enforced.*

1. *The ark of the Lord came to the house of Obed-edom for only a brief and temporary visit.* It was only once in a lifetime, and then for a few months, that they had the privilege of receiving the ark into their household. *But we may have it always.* The newly-married pair, who have just set up house-keeping, may erect this altar and worship there till old age and hoary hairs. And when death carries them away, he cannot remove the ark, but it may abide in the family down to children's children.

2. *The ark of the Lord came laden with blessings to the house of Obed-edom.* He made no excuses about being unworthy, and not fit to receive it and entertain it. He saw the ark at his door, and knew that the day of his opportunity had come, and, like a wise man, he flung wide open his door, and promptly and gladly received it.

And when he received the ark he received with it the blessing of the Lord. All that he had was hallowed and blessed. His sons grew up virtuous and strong. His entire household received the favour and blessing of God.

And when the ark of the Lord comes into your household, it comes laden with blessing. I would rather pass my days exposed to danger and death than dwell in a household that is not hallowed and blessed with family religion and a daily recognition of the claims of God. Where a family altar is erected and the ark of God dwells, I can claim the protection of God's almighty care, and the provision of His wise and wondrous providence. Let my home be where you please, but I must and will have the ark in the household.

3. The ark of the Lord came to the house of Obed-edom under peculiar and exceptional circumstances. We cannot unravel the tangled skein of providence that brought the ark to his door. There had been a great revival of religion throughout the land, and David resolved to fetch the ark of God from its obscurity at Kirjath-jearim and remove it to Mount Zion. A new cart was provided, and Uzzah and Ahio drove the oxen from the house of Abinadab as far as the threshing-floor of Chidon, while David and all Israel played and sang before God with all their might. Suddenly the oxen stumbled among the stones in the rough road, and the ark of the Lord tottered and staggered as if it would fall. Uzzah put forth his hand and touched it, when the anger of the Lord smote him so that he died. His sudden death hushed the singers and musicians, and stopped the procession. David removed the ark from the cart, and reverently placed it in the house of Obed-edom. It was a strange and mysterious providence, and we cannot solve its problems.

'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' You cannot solve the problems connected with your own conversion, and you know not the hidden springs that caused the ark of God to call at your door. Financial difficulties, family and personal affliction, sudden bereavement, terrible losses and

trials, times of religious excitement and revival, and a host of other things, are woven into the web of your life, you know not how or why, but they produce results you never expected. Prayer and Providence have brought the ark to your door to-day. Seize the opportunity and welcome the Saviour to your hearts and to your homes.

The ark of the Lord calls at every man's door. The invitations of the Gospel reached you years ago. God came very nigh to you by His Word, and His Spirit, and His servants, and His Sabbaths, and the services of His sanctuary ; and you might have enjoyed all the blessedness of His salvation at that time, but you shut the door in His face. You said : 'I am unworthy ;' 'I have been such a great sinner ;' 'I cannot entertain such a serious question ;' and when the Lord saw you would not receive Him, He left you to your own devices.

But He is at your door again to-day. Will you say again, 'Go Thy way for this time' ? The day of your opportunity has come, and your future for time and eternity depends on the answer you will give. It may be a heaven or hell question with you at this moment. God help you to decide it as wisely and promptly as Mr. and Mrs. Obed-edom !

These outlines indicate his mode of treatment of this subject, but they convey a very poor idea of the strength and grandeur of the sermon. No words can adequately represent the pathos and power of its delivery. The peroration at the end of the sermon was magnificent. The ark of the Lord at the sinner's door ! Shall it come in, with all its train of blessedness and privileges ? Or will you shut the door upon it and leave it to unhallowed hands ? These questions were enforced, and an immediate answer was demanded.

From this powerful appeal he plunged at once into a prayer-meeting. On one occasion he led a youth from a pew near the chapel door in tears of penitence to the communion rail. Soon the joy of pardon burst on that young man's soul. He sprang to his feet, grasped the preacher eagerly by the hand, and said : 'The Lord has forgiven me—where is our Will ?' They went together to the pew, and the new convert said to his brother :

'Come on, Will ; we have sinned together, let us begin to serve God together.'

In the same pew were a young man and his wife who usually attended church, and had seldom been in a chapel. But so strong was the influence and so high-strung the excitement, that they all went together to the communion rail and began to cry for mercy. The preacher placed one hand on the head of the husband, and the other on the head of the wife, and said : ' You have been united in marriage, and you shall be united in the Church.' Then he prayed fervently for their conversion, and soon they were both rejoicing in a sense of forgiveness. They are to this day useful and consistent members of Society, and the revival which commenced at the close of that sermon on the House of Obed-edom added scores to the Society.

In preaching he kept closely and intelligently, but not slavishly, to his notes. He illustrated his ideas by historical and scriptural references, by quotations from authors and poets, by analogy, and metaphor, and parable ; and contrived to keep up the interest in his sermon from beginning to end. Usually he concluded with a peroration of great power and beauty. Often it took the form of an impassioned and telling appeal, full of rugged eloquence, of thoughts that breathed, and words that burned.

He would sometimes take up an emblem, and work out his thoughts with astonishing cleverness. I remember one sermon in which the railway train was his figure of speech. The grace of God in the heart was the steam and the motive power, and the Christian was the steam-engine. The Christian's life on earth was the railway, and each succeeding year of his life was a station on the road to heaven. He pictured a young man going immediately after his conversion like a fast train with few carriages and plenty of steam. Then, as he grew older, the cares of business, the anxieties of his worldly duties, and his increasing infirmities were so many extra carriages added to the train to hinder its progress. But God gave more grace to bear a bigger load, so that the train made good progress still. At length the last station was drawing near ; the red light of the distance signal could be seen, and the devil mounted the

brake-van, and screwed down the brake to stop him on heaven's threshold. Will he win ? or will he fail ? God gives more grace, and just as the fate of the dying saint seems trembling in the balance, the unseen porter Death uncouples the engine, and it runs triumphantly into the heavenly station, while the train on the incline outside runs back and bruises the devil's head. All this, told with dramatic fire and energy, drew from his congregation loud responses of 'Hallelujah !' and 'Glory !'

He often told a story with dramatic power, and held his audience breathless and spell-bound. At the close of a sermon one Sunday evening his peroration was a picture of the gradual loss of spiritual life and power that comes over the backslider. His text was : 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' He imagined a model Christian in that congregation —a man of wealth, intelligence, piety, and power ; and there were many such in the town. Then he pictured a council in hell. He had the arch-fiend meeting his imps, as they returned from earth, and asking them where they had been and what they had done. Three of them said they had been to that town, and had made sure of three drunken outcast reprobates there. 'Is that all?' asked the arch-fiend with withering scorn ; 'any fool can catch and ruin such poor souls as these. But you must fly at higher game. There is Mr. So-and-so, a great man among the Wesleyans there. He enjoys the blessing of sanctification ; he prays three times a day ; he leads two classes ; he is the finest man in the town. Go and spread your nets round him, and don't show your ugly faces here again till you have got him securely in your toils.' They go and follow that good man to chapel, and to business, and to market, and to his fireside. They waylay, and tempt, and disappoint him for seven years, and then return to hell and report to the arch-fiend that they have run him down from praying three times a day to praying twice. There is a wild shout of joy in hell as the three imps are sent back for seven years more to run him down to praying only once. They bother him in his business till his temper becomes irritable ; they crowd upon him misfortunes of every conceivable kind ; and at the end of fourteen years return to report that his fire is almost out,

he prays but once a day, and has lost his former power and piety.

They are sent back again for seven years more, to run him off entirely. Increasing business claims and increasing infirmities are not covered by increasing piety and power with God. The fire burns out, and at the end of the third seven years they return to hell and report that they have effected his ruin, and all hell resounds with their wild shouts of laughter and applause. But the arch-fiend sternly silences their hilarity, and says to the three imps, ‘Why did you leave him? You have given him time to repent and seek for mercy. Go back again this moment and fetch him! Get him in a railway collision, or frighten his horse and throw him from his trap. Fetch him! Fetch him!’

A low wail of horror rose from the congregation as he stamped his foot and cried, ‘Fetch him!’ There was a cry for mercy from some conscience-stricken soul that told how surely the shaft had found its mark, and I have reason to believe that several of his wealthy hearers took home some truths that night they never forgot. It is many years since I heard that outburst of rugged eloquence and vivid imagery, but I have a keen appreciation of it to this day.

Another of his magnificent perorations was ‘the whirlpool.’ He pictured in vivid and realistic language the mighty maelstrom off the coast of Norway on a bright summer’s morning. The sun shone above it, and the wild sea-birds hovered over it with lazy wings, and the fishermen sailed with their fishing-boats to the fishing-ground. All nature was beautiful and lovely, and a stranger would never suspect the terrible danger of that dreadful whirlpool. It was only when the hardy fishermen became so engrossed in their work as to be unmindful of their surroundings that the real danger began. The boat drifted with the tide, for there was scarcely wind enough to fill her sails, and the fishermen plied their lines and hooks incessantly, till their frail bark was well within the outer circle of that dread whirlpool. Still they noted it not, till she was carried with ever-increasing speed from the outer circles to the smaller inner circles of the mighty maelstrom,

and they were aroused by the sound that came from the vortex.

With a wild cry of horror they seized their oars, and tried to turn her head away from the place of doom and row against the stream. They pulled till the sweat stood in bead-drops on their foreheads, and their muscles were swelled like whipcord in their arms ; but the silent resistless current swept them on to their doom. They dropped their anchor, and paid out every yard of rope ; but they could find no anchorage to prevent them from drifting. Nearer and swifter they drifted round and round the narrowing circles, till their eyes started from their sockets with fear and their hair turned prematurely grey. Then with one loud cry of despair they took the fatal plunge and were lost for ever.

Then came the whirlpool of iniquity. The bright and happy and sinless ones were enjoying life's morning and attending to life's duties. Soon they began to drift into little sins and trifling delinquencies. A little duty neglected, a small task undone, or a slovenly and careless way of doing the duties of the day, indicated that the mischief had begun already. Then came other signs of drifting away from God's service and His house ; and these were followed by open and unblushing sin, till the sinner was fairly in the charmed circle, and he knew it not.

Faster and faster he drifted to the doom of the wicked in spite of the preacher's efforts to rouse him, and in that heedless crowd who were going to death the cry of warning was scorned and disregarded. The little children were drifting, and the parents were drifting, and the old men with grey hairs were drifting, but they neither saw nor knew their danger. Soon the end must come, and with one long despairing cry of anguish they would take the fatal plunge.

We must save them ! We will save them ! God loves them. Jesus Christ redeemed them. The Holy Spirit pleads with them. Heaven is prepared for them. Satan shall not have them.

' Why should the foe Thy purchase seize ?
Remember, Lord, Thy dying groans :
The meed of all Thy sufferings these,
O claim them for Thy ransomed ones ! '

The effect of this peroration was sometimes awful. Men and women would faint and have to be carried out, and the whole congregation would be terribly excited. The sketch I have given is a mere outline, and conveys but a very poor idea of the wealth of language, and vividness of imagery, and realistic power which he displayed.

Perhaps the best-known peroration was given with his sermon on ‘Pulling them out of the Fire.’ I never had the opportunity of hearing it, but others have described it to me as something grand and awful. He preached it in one of our Lancashire towns at a time when mill fires were very common, and his hearers had seen some terrible scenes of risk and danger; but a very intelligent man who heard the sermon told me that the effect of the preacher’s language was far more terrible to him than the most appalling conflagration he had ever seen. That sermon was simply irresistible. It carried all before it. No man of human sympathies could possibly have heard it and remained unmoved.

He was an actor as well as a preacher. His looks and his gestures were often more eloquent than his words. A stamp of his foot, or a wave of his hand, or an expression of scorn in his face, would produce a profound impression. He would suit the action to the word so completely that his hearers would be charmed and spell-bound as if they were under mesmeric influence.

His manner was therefore as telling and powerful as his matter. But with all his power he never allowed himself to be unduly severe or unkind. In open-air services, and when opposed by bad men, he could employ a keen, biting, withering sarcasm that was always effective; but he preferred to be droll and humorous and kindly. With the intellectual and oratorical powers of a giant, he had the tenderness of a woman and the gentleness of a child.

He had no ambition to be ‘a popular preacher;’ his highest ambition was to be useful. It was emphatically true of his preaching: ‘The common people heard him gladly.’ He was never in more request than in the latter years of his life, and perhaps never more useful. His mission was to ‘preach the

Gospel to the poor,' and he had no special liking for Gothic chapels, and frigidly respectable congregations, though he did not object to go where duty called.

On one occasion he was invited to conduct special services in a chapel where the worshippers were comparatively wealthy, and had been accustomed to a refined and cultured ministry. I confess I felt uneasy about the results. I knew that if he offended their sense of propriety, all chances of success among certain classes would be thrown to the winds ; so I played the part of a candid friend and forewarned him. He evidently commenced the Sunday-morning service under a sense of great responsibility, and his opening prayer was one of great earnestness and fervour. He wrestled with God for a blessing, till some sympathetic soul in the congregation ventured to say ‘Amen !’ Under ordinary circumstances the offender would have been marked and remonstrated with privately. But judge of the enormity of the offence when Mr. Marsden opened his eyes and said, ‘Thank God for that “Amen,” but it is a cold one !’ Then, resuming his prayer, and throwing his whole soul into it, he drew responsive ‘Amens’ from every part of the chapel.

He sometimes had what he called ‘a hard time.’ His sermon would be carefully prepared, and logically arranged, and full of choice emblems and beautiful illustrations, and perhaps his hearers would be charmed and delighted with it ; when, all at once, and without a moment’s warning, he would say or do something that would astonish and startle his hearers beyond measure. I remember once, when he was preaching the sermon on the house of Obed-edom, and his hearers were spell-bound by its simplicity and power, he shut the Bible, and said, ‘Let us pray.’ Then he prayed that if there was a manufacturer there who was too busy making money to serve God, the Lord would burn down his mill, cause his bankers to fail, call his creditors together, and make him a bankrupt, but save his soul. He prayed for the cattle plague and all sorts of disasters to overtake the wordly-minded men who needed such discipline for their spiritual prosperity. The immediate effect of this strange conduct was to offend and to grieve a few of his

hearers ; but the ultimate effect was to fill the chapel almost to suffocation for the next service.

I confess I would rather hear him for my own edification and spiritual profit when he had a bad time than when he had a good one. His worst times to himself were often the best to his hearers, because he would not indulge in eccentricities or wild flights of fancy.

His eccentricities were always remembered when his noble and disinterested deeds were forgotten. There are thousands who remember a jocular remark he made, or a biting sarcasm he uttered, or a peculiar and perhaps unwise thing he did, without taking the trouble to see things as he saw them. He did not preach to please men ; he preached to save them. And if souls were not saved, nor backsliders reclaimed, nor believers sanctified, he regarded the service as an insult to his Master, and a delusion and a snare to his own soul.

At the request of several ministers and friends, I give an outline of his sermon on, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.’ He preached this sermon at Preston, and used the pulpit door to find the bolts and screws and bars that kept it closed.

A ROYAL VISIT.

‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.’—Rev. iii. 20.

Laodicea was the Preston or Manchester of those days. It was a centre of manufacture and trade and commerce ; and it gathered round it the wealth, intelligence, and prosperity of those times. Its inhabitants were successful business men, like your wealthy cotton manufacturers, bankers, and merchants. They stood high in social position, and could afford to indulge in dress, amusements, luxuries, and pleasures beyond the reach of others. The trade in linen and bullion had made them ‘rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing,’ so far as temporal things were concerned ; but spiritually they were ‘wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’

The Church at Laodicea was a type of many of our wealthy Churches to-day. When trade is good, and you are making money fast, you can build new chapels and preachers' houses, and pay off old debts on your premises, and hold bazaars and fancy fairs, and put up new organs, and engage popular preachers, and try to make the devil believe you are a prosperous Church. But you can't deceive him with all this outside show. He looks in at your class-meetings, and finds only two or three members present. He comes expecting a prayer-meeting after the preaching service, but he finds the organist playing the 'Hallelujah Chorus' and the people trooping home. He comes to the week-night preaching, and finds a congregation of half a score, and a cold, lifeless, formal service. He knows right well you are dying of respectability, and he won't waste his time tempting you. He will let you alone, and go to some other church where he can do more mischief.

But there comes a message from the King, by the word of His servant. He has sent me as His herald to prepare the way and announce His coming.

'BEHOLD !' You know what a stir there would be in your town if the Queen or the Prince of Wales were coming next week. You would have a general holiday that day. All work would be suspended. You would decorate the streets with flags, and banners, and triumphal arches, and you would all turn out to greet your sovereign. You would think of nothing else, and you would talk of nothing else but the royal visit for many a day. There would be no need to send the bellman round to remind you what day to leave your work and give heed to the royal visit.

But when your King and Lord comes to claim the homage of your hearts and to pay you a royal visit, you receive His message with coldness and indifference. Nobody goes out to meet Him with shouts of welcome or hearty cheers. You treat Him as the people of Alsace and Lorraine treated the Emperor of Germany and the Crown Prince after the Franco-Prussian war, when they pulled down their blinds, and locked and bolted their doors, and sat in gloomy silence as the Emperor passed. They had some excuse for refusing to see him, as

they were a conquered people, and his presence reminded them of their humiliation and defeat. But there is no excuse for you. You are rebels and traitors against your lawful King, and I come in His name to proclaim an amnesty and beseech you to be reconciled to Him. Awake! Arouse! Behold! While I speak, He is coming. He is here.

‘AT THE DOOR!’ Is He as near as that? Then He can hear my cry; then He is ready to help. Some of you have thought that the plan of salvation is a very complicated and difficult matter. You have said: ‘God is in heaven; how can He hear and save me?’ The Lord is nigh thee—at thy door—within thy reach—waiting for thy call. Nay, He is more anxious to save thee than thou art to be saved. He has called at thy door, but thou hast shut the door in His face. He is outside patiently waiting, but with thine own hands thou hast locked, and bolted, and barred, and barricaded that door. He might by His own almighty power smash that door to atoms and overwhelm thee, but He will never force thee to surrender. If He is ever to be thy King, it shall be with thy consent and approval. If thou art ever to be blessed with His favour and presence, thou must open that door.

‘KNOCK.’ Hark! He is knocking. He knocks at the door of that child’s heart as gently as the tap of a clockmaker’s hammer. If you listen very attentively, you may interpret that gentle knock. It says: ‘They that seek Me early shall find Me.’ ‘Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.’ ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’ But there are some of you that stopped your ears, and would not heed those loving, gentle knocks of mercy in your childhood. You are now in the full vigour of youth, and again the Saviour knocks; but this time it is louder and more authoritatively, like the sharp clear knock of a carpenter’s hammer. It says: ‘My son, give Me thy heart.’ ‘Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life.’ ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ ‘Ye must be born again.’ There are some of you that have disregarded all these warnings and invitations, and you are now in middle age unsaved, and still the Saviour knocks. But the knocking now is terrible as the blow of a sledge-hammer. God

has appealed to your affections and your religious instincts, your reason and your judgment ; now He makes an appeal that ought to be effectual. He takes away the pride of your heart and the joy of your life at one fell stroke. I see some of you are in mourning ; you have the marks of death upon you. You stood by the open grave, and looked for the last time on the face of your loved one. You felt that your loved one had withered like grass, and vanished like smoke, and there came a solemn terrible knock that said, ‘Prepare to meet thy God.’ ‘How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?’ ‘Give an account of thy stewardship.’

There is an old sinner here who has disregarded all these knocks, and has just heard a call terrible as the blow of a Nasmyth steam-hammer. Fell disease laid you low, and for weeks your life was trembling in the balance. Your business fell into confusion. You made bad debts and suffered heavy losses. God touched your purse and your person, and still you would not yield. Now He is saying to you, ‘Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh.’ It is the last knock you will hear from Him. He will say to His messenger, Death, ‘Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ Do you say you will repent ? Then cry to Him now, before He leaves you for ever :

‘Stay, Thou insulted Spirit, stay,
Though I have done Thee such despite,
Nor cast the sinner quite away,
Nor take Thine everlasting flight.

Though I have steeled my stubborn heart,
And still shook off my guilty fears,
And vexed, and urged Thee to depart,
For many long rebellious years ;

Yet, O ! the chief of sinners spare,
In honour of my great High Priest ;
Nor in Thy righteous anger swear
To exclude me from Thy people’s rest.’

'OPEN THE DOOR.' You say, 'I can't.' Why, what is the matter with it? O, it is like this pulpit door, fastened in the inside. I may shake it for ever so long, but it won't open unless I draw the bolt. Why, what can be the matter with this door? How is it fastened? I find a *screw* here. O, you put that screw in. Your father died without a will, and you were the eldest son; so you administered, and took all the property. You gave your widowed mother just enough to keep her out of the workhouse, and your younger brothers and sisters were left to shift for themselves. But the God Who is the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of the widow marked that transaction, and recorded it against you in His book. You will have to restore your ill-gotten gains, and give up what you got dishonestly, if you mean to pull the screw out. There is another man here, who failed in business and paid five shillings in the pound. He borrowed money from 'the widow, and the fatherless, and him that had no helper;' and as soon as he got his discharge from the Bankruptcy Court, he snapped his fingers at his creditors, and made a greater show and stir in business than ever. He will have to pay the other fifteen shillings in the pound before that screw can be pulled out. Dishonesty and selfishness must go out if the Lord Jesus Christ is to come in.

'Open the door!' What is the matter with it yet? Here is a *nail*—a big, strong, tenpenny nail, and it is a clumsy contrivance of yours to fasten the door. When the Lord asked you years ago to open the door and let Him come in, you said: 'O, I don't need salvation. I am as good as most professing Christians, and better than many. I will take heed to my ways, and live a moral, upright, honest life.' So your self-righteousness and pride barricaded the door, and kept the Lord Jesus Christ out of your heart. If you do not humble yourself before God and confess your sins, He will not have mercy upon you. He will pass you by, as he passed the proud Pharisee of old, and He will visit the conscience-stricken publican who cries: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

'Open the door!' Is it fast yet? Yes, it is *barred* by prejudice. You are fond of having your own way. You would not object

to be saved, if you could have salvation on your own terms and according to your own desires. Naaman went to be healed by the prophet with a prescription of his own, and when he found the Lord's way so different from his own way, 'he turned and went away in a rage.' You cannot make up your mind to come to the penitent form, and publicly confess Christ before men, but you hope to be saved on the quiet, and slip into the Church without either men or devils knowing it. You had better draw the bar, and open the door, and let the Lord save you in His own way, and on His own terms.

'Open the door!' What is the barrier now? It is *locked* by your strong self-will. God has appealed to you by His Word, His servants, His Spirit, and His providence. He has threatened you with all the terrors of 'the wrath to come.' He has upbraided and reproached you for your wilful rejection of Him. You might have been saved years ago, if you had been willing to submit and repent.

'Nay, but I yield, I yield !
I can hold out no more ;
I sink, by dying love compelled,
And own Thee Conqueror.'

'Open the door!' Nay, it is *bolted* by unbelief. You will not take God at His word. You will not believe that God says what He means, and means what He says. You make God a liar, and insult Him to His face. You must repent of your sins, and cast yourself on His mercy. Let your cry be: 'Lord, I believe : help Thou mine unbelief.' And when you cease from your own works, and cast away your selfishness and pride, your prejudice, self-will, and unbelief, the barriers will be removed, and your Lord and King will come in.

'I WILL COME IN.' An empty house is better than a bad tenant. The old tenant made a sad mess of the house. He let it run to rack and ruin. He allowed it to be defiled by sin, and to become a nest of unclean birds. But,

'When Jesus makes my heart His home,
My sin shall all depart ;
And lo ! He saith, I quickly come,
To fill and rule thy heart !'

Be it according to Thy word !
 Redeem me from all sin ;
 My heart would now receive Thee, Lord ;
 Come in, my Lord, come in !'

When He comes in, the strong man armed will be cast out, and the heart that has been defiled by sin will be purified, and become a temple of the Holy Ghost.

'AND SUP WITH HIM.' We have no spiritual food to offer Thee, Lord. We cannot set a table before Thee worthy of Thy acceptance. We have nothing but the bread of affliction, and water mingled with our tears. We have tasted of bitterness and anguish and sorrow, and we are unworthy that Thou shouldst come under our roof. 'Well,' He says, 'it is poor fare, but I will not despise it. I will bear your griefs, and carry your sorrows, and help your infirmities. I will sup with you.'

Hallelujah ! He that wept with Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus will sympathise with you.

'He knows what sore temptations mean,
 For He hath felt the same.'

'AND HE WITH ME.' Some of the kings of England used to test the loyalty of their wealthy subjects by paying visits of state with their servants and attendants. Many a nobleman has been compelled to impoverish himself by providing on a magnificent scale of hospitality for the king and his retinue. But when our King comes, He brings His own provisions with Him. He spreads our table right royally, for He provides like a King. He feeds our souls with the bread of life. All the promises of His Word, both for the life that now is, and for the life that is to come, are given to us. There is no want to them that fear Him. When He comes to sup with us, it is farewell poverty, and hardship, and want ! He makes us kings and priests unto God. We sit with Him in heavenly places. We become His children, and entitled to all the protection, love, and care He bestows upon His family. He lifts us from the dunghill, and seats us by His side.

'How can it be, Thou heavenly King,
 That Thou shouldst us to glory bring ?

Make slaves the partners of Thy throne,
Deck'd with a never-fading crown ?'

'BEHOLD, I STAND.' When a man sits down and makes himself at home, you know he is not likely to move in a hurry. But if he stands with his hat on his head and his staff in his hand, you expect him to go very soon. The attitude of the Saviour in my text is very suggestive. He is not there without a solemn purpose. If you open the door, He will come in. But if you remain impenitent and heedless, He will go away and leave you. He may go away now, never to return again. Your salvation may be now or never. Accept Him while you have the chance. 'Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.'

Then followed a grand and solemn peroration, in which he pictured angels and devils watching with intense interest the terrible possibilities resulting from that sermon. The knocking, lingering, loving Saviour outside was pictured to the life. Then the dalliance of the soul with sin, and its trifling with the awful realities of eternity, and the fearful risks involved in such conduct, were painted in language that fairly made the flesh creep, and almost made men shriek with horror. It was such a powerful, telling sermon as no mere words can describe. Its effects were seen in the voluntary surrender of many sinners to Christ during the prayer-meeting that followed.

CHAPTER XIII.

MENTAL POWER.

I HAVE met with many persons who regarded Mr. Marsden as a mere copyist and a retailer of other men's ideas. They seemed to think that he did a large business with a very limited stock in trade, and a very small capital.

Those who knew him best will be able to testify that he had a masculine mind, of great originality, and poetic or creative power.

A Wesleyan minister who knew Mr. Marsden intimately for many years, thus speaks of his mental power and intellectual ability :

'He loved the works of the masters in mental science. His well-stored carpet-bag usually contained some of their choicest and most recent productions ; and such works as those of Sir William Hamilton, Dr. M'Cosh, and others of a similar character, were perused with intense avidity. When drawn out by favourable circumstances, he could display mental resources of no ordinary value. On one occasion, at the meeting of a literary society, when preceded by a noble lord of high ability, he proceeded to discuss problems of deep significance with a mastery so complete, and an eloquence so masculine, as to astonish the audience, and call forth repeated expressions of admiration.

'The local preachers of the Doncaster Circuit were wont to meet for a social repast and conversation or discussion of an improving class. At one of these meetings the theory of Bishop Burnet on an ideal world formed the subject of discussion, and the masterly address given by Mr. Marsden made

a profound impression on his brethren, and indicated the wide range of his intellectual pursuits.

'Some of his mission speeches were delivered under favourable circumstances, and were distinguished by a masterly exposition of the principles suggested by the theme. A marvellous meeting, held amid the ruins of Conisborough Castle near Doncaster, was attended by a large multitude of earnest Yorkshire Methodists. Mr. Marsden gathered round him a band of praying men, and with strains of holy melody they made the welkin ring. Then, looking round on the grey crumbling walls and ancient towers of that castle, around which the associations of so many centuries had gathered, he seemed inspired. The ruins and decay of the old castle were types of the decline of idolatry and superstition, and the fresh foliage and flowers of that glad summer's day foreshadowed the new life and beauty of these Gospel days. He engaged in fervent intercession for the destruction of idolatry and the universal reign of Christ, while the warm responses of multitudes told how fully their hearts were in unison with his own.'

He had not only the poetic or creative power, as I have already shown, but he had the gift of exposition and illustration in a high degree. He had a lecture on 'The Model Wife,' founded on Proverbs xxxi. 10-31, that was deservedly popular. In that lecture he gave a masterly exposition of the Scripture language, showing an intimate acquaintance with the etymology and derivation of the words, and displaying traces of careful study and diligent research. Then he brought out and focussed, one by one, the strong points of the character of this model wife—her piety, her modesty, her industry, her charity, her intelligence; and conveyed some sterling truths in such a form that they would never be forgotten. The shrewd common-sense, the practical wisdom, the genius and spirit of religion, which he displayed in that lecture, won for him golden opinions and well-merited applause.

He had also a lecture on 'The Model Husband,' as a companion picture to 'The Model Wife'; but he had not the same scope in it for the display of his mental powers and ability. His lecture on 'The Dignity of Labour' was an able exposure

of the shams and fallacies that mislead and beguile working men. He raised the humblest task and most menial duty to a privilege and a means of blessing, when done in a right spirit. His illustrations were pointed and powerful, and were received by thoughtful men with admiration and delight.

He had a remarkable lecture on ‘The Economic Aspect of the Sunday-School Question.’ Starting with the objection that Sunday-schools cost a great deal, and produce but small results, he proceeded to argue that their indirect results are worth all they cost to the community. He entered into a mass of figures, compiled from the most trustworthy sources, showing the number of Sunday-schools in England, the number of scholars, the cost of maintenance, and the average cost for each child. Then he supposed that next Sunday every school would be closed, and the children left to do as they pleased. They would trespass on the fields of the farmer, they would damage the property of the nation in various ways, they would soil and tear their own clothes, and they would involve their parents and friends and the public in serious financial loss. Taking a very moderate estimate of these various sources of loss, he easily proved that if there were no religious teaching at all, as a matter of national and social economy alone, it would never pay us to close our Sunday-schools.

He had not only the poetic or creative power, and the gift of exposition and illustration, but he had considerable logical and argumentative ability.

He had a lecture on ‘The Love of Human Applause a Motive to Virtue,’ founded on Matt. xxiii. 5, ‘But all their works they do for to be seen of men.’ In this lecture he argues that ‘*a love of glory is sufficient to produce all those virtuous actions that are visible in the lives of those who profess religion.*’

1. The noblest of the heathen often excelled in particular virtues. The chastity of Scipio—the liberality of Augustus—the severity of Cato—the integrity of Fabricius, all came from a desire to be famous for these virtues. In professors of religion the glory of God is not always the commanding, producing principle of their best actions. The Pharisees outwardly did all that a good man might do—gave God solemn service—were

frequently at prayer—gave alms—sat in the seat of Moses—taught better than they practised—were full of zeal—compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. Such a reputation had they among men that it was said : ‘If only two men are saved in the world, one of them will be a Pharisee.’ Yet all their motive was ‘to be seen of men.’ So Christians in all ages have had in their ranks men who had not goodness enough to be religious. They were different inside from outside. They loved fame and praise and position. Their motive was ‘to be seen of men.’

2. Because there is nothing visible in the very best actions, but may proceed from the very worst principles, if acted with prudence, caution, and design. A concern for reputation will keep a man virtuous. There is no external discrimination of the hypocrite from the sincere person. What one does, the same is done by the other. A stone shot from a sling, and a bird flying through the air, have both motion ; but one is the motion of lifeless matter, received from the hand of a living agent ; and the other is voluntary, of itself, from an inward life. The one is violent and unnatural ; the other is natural. A touch of ambition may supply the room of a better principle, in those outward instances of virtue that shine only on the surface of men’s lives, yet are sufficient to attract the attention of those who can look no farther. We know designs inferior to these have produced a show of piety and outward moral rectitude. The love of gain—the lowest and basest motive that can be found—has made many a man a hypocrite ; but the love of glory is as much above the love of gain as the mind of Cæsar was above that of a cowherd.

3. And yet the love of glory is a proper pleasure of the mind. It may be defined as that complacency which a man finds within himself arising from his conceit of the opinion that another has of some excellency or perfection in him. Pride is the opinion which a man has of his own perfection. Glory is the pleasure he takes from the opinion that another has of it. Dionysius used to say of his parasites and flatterers, that though he knew that what they had said of him was false, yet he could not but find himself pleased with it. And while glory enamours and delights men, disgrace afflicts and distresses.

Hence it is no wonder that acquiring the one and avoiding the other should so potently command our actions. For what are our actions but the servants of our appetites? Nobody is in pain to-day because his head ached a month ago, but it is otherwise with the afflictions of dishonour. Wherever they fasten, they leave their marks behind. Dishonour is a pain not to be slept away—a scar not to be worn off. It is a fit emblem of hell—pain, irksome and perpetual. A man will do anything to secure his honour and reputation—that is, to live while he is alive, and not to be the scorn of the world.

4. The love of glory is founded on the innate desire of superiority that is in every man, and it is the great instrument of life to have a fair reputation, and really opens the way into all the advantages of it. All the accommodations of life—power, wealth, offices, friends—are often derivable from the good opinion which men have procured themselves by the outward and seeming piety of their behaviour.

5. The love of glory is not a sufficient motive to engage mankind in virtuous actions without the assistance of religion. Virtue and good life determine not in outward practices. A man may act like a saint before men, and like a devil before God. And, on the contrary, he may appear but mean outwardly, and yet be all glorious within. Virtue and vice are the perfection and pollution of the soul. The principle of glory governs a man's actions entirely by the judgment and opinion of the world concerning them.

6. Even those actions that a love of glory does produce are of no value in the sight of God. They are deficient in respect of their producing cause, which should be a real love of virtue; and they are deficient in respect of the end to which they are directed. The end is self, whereas it should be the glory of God.

I make no apology for inserting the outline notes of the foregoing lecture. They will convey to the reader a better impression of Mr. Marsden's mental power than any descriptive matter of my own, and they will confirm the statements I have made.

In addition to the lectures already named he had thought-

ful and weighty lectures on ‘The Universal Law of Progress ;’ ‘The Moral Causes of Bad Trade ;’ ‘The Three Grandest Pillars of the Universe ;’ ‘The Democracy of Christianity ;’ ‘The Human Face,’ and ‘The Hooks and Eyes of Society.’ These lectures were the result of much reading, thought, research, and labour ; and were masterly and popular expositions of his religious, social, and political principles.

In his later years, however, he became so absorbed in his preaching and evangelistic work that he never gave a lecture willingly. If his friends put considerable pressure upon him, he would oblige them, though he always felt that he ought to have been making better use of his time.

He had the same objections to lecturing as to preaching fine sermons. They pleased and instructed and amused his hearers, but they brought no sinners to Christ, and produced no spiritual results. Hence, if he allowed himself to be cajoled into a lecturing tour, he would repent of his bargain before he was half through it, and growl and grumble at the folly that permitted him to yield to persuasion against his better judgment. Here is a characteristic growl of this kind :

‘ I have been going out of my ordinary course, out of great respect to some of my dear friends. They are trying to raise £1000, and I have been giving lectures in most of the leading places in the circuit. They have had me hard at work every night, and will keep me at it till Thursday. Methodism here is very low, and the people generally are poor and feeble. I have never heard a really good voice, nor seen a really good face, since I came to this place. They have not a spark of the lion about them. Last night I thought and felt as if the people were as slow and stupid as so many donkeys. I shall be glad when next Friday comes, for I have made a great mistake. My calling is preaching the Gospel and saving souls, and sticking to one place during my stay ; and I mean to stick to my own work in future.’

And so he would, till some poverty-stricken circuit got at his heart instead of his head, and successfully appealed to his sympathies instead of his judgment.

CHAPTER XIV

A WELCOME GUEST.

I INVITED Mr. Marsden to spend two or three weeks at my house and engage in evangelistic work in our village. He accepted my invitation, and thus gave me an opportunity of observing his home life.

When he entered the door, he cordially shook hands with me and my wife, and, standing bare-headed in the hall, gave us the apostolic benediction : ‘Peace be unto this house.’ He took baby from the nurse’s arms, gently kissed it, and pronounced a solemn blessing : ‘The Lord bless thee and keep thee ; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.’ He then shook hands with the servant, and spoke a few kindly words to her that won her sympathy and admiration.

At the table his conversation was free and unrestrained. He made himself a member of the household, and shared all the family joys and sorrows. He could be as playful as a kitten, as loving as a father, and as wise as a sage. He never thrust his religious opinions offensively in the household, but he won the esteem of all the family by his meek and Christian spirit.

As soon as the meal was ended, he would push back his chair from the table, and, before you were aware of it, he would kneel down to return thanks. Sometimes he would mention almost every dish on the table as matters of thankfulness for God’s wise and wondrous providence. I have heard him thank God for fetching the tea from China, the sugar from the West Indies, the rain from the oceans of earth and air, the cream from the animal world, and the bread from the vegetable

world, and concentrating them all on my table. And as the magnitude of God's forethought and wise providence impressed him, he would say, 'Hallelujah !' and he would expect me to say, 'Amen.'

Then he would pray for every individual by name in the household. If any of them were unconverted, special mention of their needs would be made to God, but in such language as could never offend them or drive them from the Saviour. He always kept a warm place in his affections for the children, and the sweetest and richest prayers used to be reserved for baby. I have even heard him mention the kitten and the dog, as included in the household, and as claiming a share in God's good providence.

If any visitors had been invited to meet him at the table, he always remembered them individually and prayed for them with wondrous kindness and sympathy. These prayers and thanksgivings never occupied more than three or four minutes, and then he rose to his feet and resumed the thread of his conversation, or retired to his study.

These prayers and thanksgivings in the family were often wonderfully blessed in their results. He was once entertained by a widow lady with seven or eight young children. Her husband had died a short time before, leaving his estate in the hands of executors, who were disposed to treat her unfairly. He made diligent inquiries about the settlement of her affairs, and found that if the executors were disposed to be hard and unkind, they had the power to inflict great injustice and wrong under the powers of the will. The only power that could touch them was the Spirit of God ; so he knelt with the widow and orphans beside the table, and prayed that God would touch the secret springs of these men's hearts and dispose them to deal generously and kindly with the family. He prayed so fervently and so believably that his prayer was answered, and the widow received considerable financial help, and her affairs were placed in such a position that she was able to bring up her family in comfort and respectability.

He not only enjoyed the hospitality of the friends, but preached the duty and privileges of hospitality, and practised

what he preached. His own house was ever open to entertain those who loved and served the Master, and he counted it an honour and privilege to receive a stranger in the Master's name.

During the excitement of the last connexional agitation, the ministers had been informed that they could no longer receive the usual hospitality or find a home in a certain town. So he went and preached 'a sermon for the times' from the words : 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.' In that sermon he traced the privileges of hospitality from the remotest times, and showed how God's people had often entertained angels unawares. He convinced his congregation that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive,' and at the close of the sermon there were many families competing for the honour of entertaining the messengers of the Gospel.

From the numerous letters I have received it is clear that many of our people have reckoned it a very high privilege to entertain Mr. Marsden. One gentleman said to me recently : 'While he was at my house, all my children were converted ; and he taught them to pray every night and morning : "God bless Mr. Marsden." They have prayed that prayer regularly ever since ; and though they are now big boys and girls, and know that he is dead and gone to heaven, they cannot find in their hearts to leave him out of their prayers. They pray for him still.'

His love for the little ones and his anxiety for their conversion were remarkable. He gave me the names and addresses of young children, from five to seven years of age, who were converted, and rejoicing in the love and favour of God. He used to pray for them every day, and they used to mention him in their prayers.

I believe he found his way to many a home and many a heart through his influence with the children. I know families who would never dream of entertaining a revivalist under ordinary circumstances, yet who gave him a cordial welcome on account of his power over the little ones. Some of these young lives have been cut short, but as long as they

lived he sent each of them a kind letter or a card with a suitable text of Scripture on their birthday or at Christmas. Some of his most touching letters are to be found at this moment locked up in careful keeping with a tress of golden hair or the portrait of a loved and lost one. These kind notes and cards are highly prized by bereaved parents, whose lambs are now in the Saviour's bosom, and whom there is nothing to remind of the little saints but the faded treasures and withered leaves they left behind.

There are many cases on record where every member of the household—father, mother, sons, daughters, man-servants and maid-servants—gave their hearts to God through his visit to the household, and became consistent and pious Christians.

He did not lightly give up the object on which his heart was set. He had been made a great blessing to a certain family, and in the course of one of his journeys he met with a brother whom he had never seen before. He had heard of him, and often wished to see him, that he might seek his spiritual good. There were three or four other gentlemen in the same compartment of a second-class carriage, but this fact did not prevent him from preaching Christ to the gentleman he had been seeking so long. In a letter to me, describing the interview, he told me how they had sweet and profitable conversation together, and how they kneeled down and prayed in the carriage before they parted.

When he had promised to accept the hospitality of a friend, nothing but a serious illness would prevent him from fulfilling his engagement. He would break faith neither with his friends nor with the public, if he could help it. Some years ago I had been preaching anniversary sermons in the Grassington Circuit, and as I drove home with the Rev. John Booth he told me the following characteristic story illustrative of this statement.

He said that one Saturday evening Mr. Marsden reached his house utterly exhausted. He had a quinsy in his throat that would have kept any ordinary man in bed for some days. But, rather than disappoint a congregation, he had travelled by train and coach till he was quite worn out. Mr. Booth prepared a foot-bath of mustard and hot water, and applied hot fomenta-

tions to his neck and throat, and chatted so cheerily that Mr. Marsden quickly rallied from the cold and exhaustion. ‘I’ll tell thee what, Isaac,’ said Mr. Booth, ‘thou hast taught me to sing one verse of Wesley’s hymns that I could never fully realise till to-night.’ ‘What verse is that?’ he asked.

‘O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesu’s witnesses !
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash His dear disciples’ feet !’

Mr. Marsden laughed so heartily that he burst the quinsy, and was able to preach next day with his usual power and success.

During his visit to my house we saw little of him except at meal-times. No matter how early we rose, he would be hard at work in his study. I had a rather select library, and he was very fond of the company of my authors. He diligently read, and took copious notes, and filled his carpet-bag with the gleanings of my library. His notes would be of little use to any one but himself, as he used many hieroglyphics and signs that nobody else could understand. He was singularly well informed on a great variety of subjects for a self-taught man. He could talk intelligently about chemistry, botany, animal physiology, astronomy, geology, history, physical geography, and mental science. He was a most interesting companion, a shrewd observer of men and things, and a diligent worker.

When summoned to breakfast, or dinner, or tea, he would lay aside his studies and join us at the table in a chatty, agreeable mood. He would take the greatest interest in domestic matters, and act and speak as one of the family. As soon as the meal was ended, he would push back his chair, fall upon his knees, return thanks and pray, and in a few minutes afterwards return to his studies.

In the early part of the day he prepared his sermons, lectures, and speeches, and stored his mind with intellectual food. He spent some time in prayer and meditation, thus preparing his mind and heart for the duties of the day. After breakfast he would spend a few minutes in reading the newspapers, and informing himself of what was going on in the world around

him. Then he would take a walk among my neighbours, to find out what sort of people they were. He had many amusing adventures among the ignorant and degraded classes, and some that were inexpressibly sad and distressing. These reconnoitring expeditions would be the subject of conversation over dinner.

We had either a very early or a late dinner, that he might have time to give a short address at the dinner-hour to the workpeople. These addresses were delivered in the open air if the weather was fine, or in the workshop when it was unfavourable.

The afternoon would be spent in correspondence, reading, meditation and prayer, to prepare himself for the long and exhausting work of the evening. The first service, from seven o'clock to half-past, would be held in the open air—generally in the market-place, or some centre of a dense population—for the purpose of gathering a congregation. A hymn would then be sung, and they would adjourn to the chapel for the ordinary service.

Thus his whole time and attention would be given to his work. He had a mission, and he diligently and conscientiously attended to it. Sometimes he would regret that his duties took up so much of his time and attention. Thus I find him writing to one kind host, who was about to entertain him for two or three weeks, in these terms :

‘I keep close to my studies, and I like to be alone. I am at home in my studies. I have no liking for dinner-parties. I can do with a chat at tea and then be free and easy, but as soon as breakfast is over I long to be off into my room to my books and papers. Life is short, and I feel I have not five minutes to spare.

‘It will be a long time for me to remain in one house. You will long for quietness days before I am gone. You will have a rare good wife if she does not complain and chatter about it. Well, perhaps she is the better of the two. If she is like my wife, she is, and no mistake; for she lets me do as I like, or nearly so, and I do the same with her. She is all order, and I am all disorder: so we agree very well.

'I have no doubt I shall be comfortable, but I shall want to make you so too. I am so habituated to live in storms, that what is grand order with me is often disorder with others, especially in the domestic circle. I am often out late at the chapel; it was ten o'clock last night—the communion was well filled with inquirers; and this is the manner of my life, and has been for nearly half a century. How can I change? In the daytime I am much alone in my study, preparing for storms, or for war with the prince of darkness; for wherever I go I meet with that prince. If you think he is in your town, we had better all be prepared, or he will conquer every man of us; and then what would our enemies say? Let us make sure of victory by the blood of the Lamb.'

The most striking feature of his home life was his all-pervading piety. He literally prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks. Religion seemed to be the one absorbing, commanding principle with him. It had his attention first, and last, and always. And my experience of him is confirmed by all I hear from those who have entertained him in other places.

The Rev. George Buckley says that on New Year's Day, 1861, he and Mr. Marsden were at Hayle in Cornwall, and had a walk over the sand-hills by the seaside to a place called 'The Towans.' The day was remarkably fine and mild for the time of year; and while Mr. Buckley was quietly enjoying the beauties of the romantic scenery, and trying to make out the ships in the distance, his friend most mysteriously vanished. He looked round for him, and called aloud, but could find no trace of him. At last he heard a voice singing :

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

Guided by the sound, he espied a large cleft or aperture in a huge rock overlooking the sea, and found that Mr. Marsden had hid himself in this rock to muse and meditate, and spiritualise the scenery and its surroundings. From the rocks they descended to the sea-shore, and, finding the sands dry and firm and that all was lonely and quiet, they knelt together and

prayed for a special blessing on that bright New Year's Day. And such a prayer he offered as Mr. Buckley had never heard; for in the strength of the blessing they received they went to pastoral visitation and evangelistic work with great success.

Another gentleman writes: 'I have had the honour and pleasure of entertaining Mr. Marsden, and I treated him with the highest esteem and respect. I never knew a more devoted man of God. His one end and aim in life seemed to be to save souls. He was a most interesting, genial, and instructive companion, and I dearly liked his society. His varied stores of information and experience were willingly laid out for the benefit of those who entertained him. I got more good under his preaching, and from conversation with him upon spiritual subjects, than I ever got from any other man. Sometimes he gave utterance to statements which appeared fallacious and paradoxical, but which upon calm consideration were seen to be well founded, because they were well grounded on the unerring, infallible Word of God, in which he was so well versed. He thoroughly despised all shams, and he did not care to trim and polish his sentences, either in preaching or in private conversation, to please simpering misses or spruce dandies. I have heard him from the pulpit pour such a fire of red-hot shot upon the brainless dandies and flippant coxcombs, that I have thought it would surely cause their eye-glasses, rings, and tawdry ornaments to be abolished for ever. After one of his short characteristic addresses at a prayer-meeting in our chapel, in which he gave his views about dress and ornaments in particular, a young gentleman stood up, and, pulling out the gold studs from his shirt front, said he would never wear such things again after what he had heard. He wished the preacher to take them into his own possession, and either sell them and apply the proceeds to some charity, or make the best use of them he could, as he was resolved henceforth to lead a life of great simplicity and self-denial. At first Mr. Marsden refused to take the studs, and treated the matter rather humorously; but, finding the young gentleman deeply moved and terribly in earnest, he smilingly took the studs, and said he should perhaps

some day show them at a similar service and relate the incident for the benefit of others.

'Several years have elapsed since this little incident occurred, but the young gentleman who relinquished his studs gave up everything for Christ, became a successful evangelist, and is now doing noble work for God in various parts of the country. Many young men and women who were won over to the service of Christ during Mr. Marsden's labours amongst us are now the most earnest workers in the Church.'

Another gentleman says : 'There was a man in our village whom Mr. Marsden ardently longed to see converted. He used to speak to him at the services, and visit him at his home, and the man was strangely impressed and powerfully affected, but yet he successfully resisted the strivings of the Spirit and the appeals of the preacher. Mr. Marsden used to say : "I have tried several times to worry him, and could not kill him ; but I shall not give him up." The last time he came to our village to preach, shortly before his death, he spoke rather despondently about the man's conversion, and was grieved that he did not see him at the service. So he went to the house and opened the door, but could find no one at home. He called aloud, but received no response, except a few words from a parrot in a cage. So he knelt beside the hearth in the man's house, and prayed most fervently for the man's conversion. Then he closed the door after him, and came to tell me what he had done. As he left us for the last time he said : "Tell Brother —— I have been praying for him in his house, but I had nobody to say Amen but the parrot." Since his death that man has given his heart to God, and joined our Society, and seems likely to become a useful Christian.'

Another correspondent says : 'I am very glad that you are writing a memoir of our departed friend, who did such good service in the Lord's vineyard. Mr. Marsden was a great favourite with the children here. He called them his Hallelujah boys and girls, and invariably made it a rule to invite them to his services to sing "Hallelujah" for him ; and the eager interest which the little ones displayed, and the affectionate regard they had for the old man, were very touching. In going to a service he

would have a crowd of children about him, and I never saw any of them who could resist the combined effects of his genial smile, his loving homely ways, his interesting and original style of talking to them, and his "butter-scotch." At the close of his series of services he would have a "bun-feast," or "an apple-feast," or "an orange-feast," so that at his departure he filled the young children's minds with a bright and pleasing recollection of him. He told my little children to call him "grandpapa Marsden." As an instance of the abiding hold he got of the children's affections, one of the last names mentioned by my little girl, who died a short time after he had been staying with us, was that of our dear departed friend. It appears that during his visit on one occasion the child had not complied with his request that she would sing "Hallelujah" for him; and now, remembering her old friend, she gasped out with great difficulty: "Tell grandpapa Marsden that though I wouldn't sing 'Hallelujah' for him when he asked me, I will when I see him again." Our little lamb never saw him again on earth, but no doubt by this time she has redeemed her promise and sung "Hallelujah" with him in their heavenly home.'

The testimony of another friend who entertained him is: "He first stayed at my house nearly forty years ago. At our Sunday-morning service he gave us a very powerful sermon from the words: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee," &c., and held a prayer-meeting at the close of the service. In driving home to dinner we overtook a young lady and her father, and invited them to dine with us. The father declined, as he had duties at home, but desired his daughter to go with us to dinner. As soon as dinner was over, we held a love-feast in the dining-room, but we soon had to turn it into a prayer-meeting; for the young lady who had dined with us began crying for mercy, and was soon made happy in God's love, and many of us were wonderfully blessed. In the evening the young lady's father and at least a dozen more of our congregation were converted. At our afternoon meeting in the dining-room my youngest sister obtained the blessing of entire sanctification, and lived a very holy life, and died a triumphant death. After her death we found secreted in an old pocket-

book the following memorandum : "Sept. 8th, 1844.—This has been a high day to my soul. About twelve persons found peace with God after two very powerful sermons preached by Mr. Isaac Marsden of Doncaster, and one of my female friends obtained the blessing of pardon during the afternoon in my brother's house, where we had a very powerful prayer-meeting. We were quite an hour on our knees at one time, some pleading for mercy, and two at least for perfect love. Having lost my evidence of this great blessing, I thought, 'If Christ by His blood can wash away the sins of my friend, He can by the same blood cleanse my heart from all unrighteousness ;' and I was enabled to take Christ as my Redeemer, my Sanctifier, my all in all, and to rejoice in Him exceedingly."

From another letter I extract the following : 'Sixteen years ago I was saved from a reckless career and converted to God through the instrumentality of Mr. Marsden. The vow I then made to the Lord is still unbroken, and I am still in God's service.'

So I might continue the testimonies from every part of the country. Wherever he went, his conduct and conversation in the homes of the people made a deep and abiding impression. He would have no frivolity, or foolish and unprofitable conversation. He would not listen to idle gossip, and he would not endure slander. And yet he had nothing mournful or repulsive about him. His religion never made him gloomy, or morose, or disagreeable. He was as sunny, and light-hearted, and cheerful as a schoolboy out for a holiday. He brought sunshine into the house when he came, and the blessing of the Lord came with him. If he had never done anything else but dwell for a few days in Christian homes in each circuit in England, he would have lighted altar fires, and brought whole families to Christ. His power in the family was as great as his power in the pulpit. It is said there is a skeleton in every house, and a black sheep in every flock ; and he took care to seek the stray wayward sheep and bring them back to the fold. In scores of instances he has been the peace-maker in family strife, and the healer of domestic wounds. He has followed a wayward daughter or a rebellious son, and dogged their steps,

and worked and prayed for their conversion for months and years.

His secret labours will never be known, because charity must draw a veil over the private life and secret sins that cost him so much time and labour.

Often in the evening, when he stayed with us, we sat up till midnight in interesting and profitable conversation. Sometimes the ministers of the circuit and a few of the leaders would have supper with us, and then hold a council of war, discussing our plans and purposes and modes of working with great animation and profit. In these conversations he was always ready to receive hints and suggestions from others, and in return gave us the benefit of his wide experience.

Sometimes we drew him out in conversation on the success of his mission in different parts of the country. The story sounded like a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles. He had visited dense populations in large towns without the means of grace and the opportunities of worship, and preached in the streets till a room of some kind could be found to house the infant church he founded. Then he told of miracles of mercy among the neglected outcasts, and of brands plucked from the burning, till our souls were strangely warmed by the good tidings. He would tell the story of his own conversion and early career as a preacher and evangelist. He would describe the abject condition in which he first met men and women who became his spiritual children, and tell how they had been raised to positions of usefulness and respectability. Then he would fall down on his knees and pray that power from on high might rest upon each of us, and that every service we conducted might be a Pentecost, and that the devil's kingdom might be mightily shaken.

Thus the days flew by in peace and holy joy. The guest was our priest; the home was a temple; and the blessing of the Lord that came with him lingered with us long after he had left us.

C H A P T E R X V

DOMESTIC CHANGES.

FOR many years Mr. Marsden's mother was in delicate health. She suffered at times acute bodily pain, and lingered long in extreme weakness and debility.

The home at Skelmanthorpe had been broken up, and the whole family had settled in Doncaster, so that they were now one united family.

His mother's sufferings called forth his liveliest sympathy. His love for her was most touching and tender. He would never start on a journey without going into her room and praying most earnestly for grace and strength for her to bear her afflictions patiently. And as soon as he returned he would throw the reins on the horse's back and rush to her bedside to thank God she was yet alive. He would often say : 'Lord Jesus, Thou hadst a mother ; Thou didst love Thy mother, and I love my mother. Spare her to me yet a little while, and fill her soul with Thy Divine love.' So he would talk with God and plead for hours by her bedside, and the richest blessings would descend on both mother and son.

She was a confirmed invalid for some time, and medical skill could not relieve her sufferings or take away her pain. Still she meekly and patiently bore her affliction, for her confidence in God never failed. Sometimes the consolations of His grace were very sweet and precious, and she was enabled to triumph in the Lord.

But the end of her conflict came at last. On Tuesday, August 3rd, 1847, she died in peace and triumph. He compared her last hours to the capture of a citadel by a resistless foe. The outworks were carried by storm, and fell one by one into the

enemy's hands, till the last stand was made in the citadel within, but after a short siege it surrendered and all was lost.

To the last she retained her intellectual faculties. She knew her end was approaching, for death laid his icy hand on her extremities and gradually advanced towards her heart. All the family gathered round the bed, watching her dissolution. As long as her voice lasted she shouted, 'Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb !' and when her voice failed, a heavenly smile lingered on her features. She died in the full assurance of faith, at the age of sixty-five.

Her death made a profound impression on Mr. Marsden. Writing on September 1st, 1847, he says :

'This is a time of much weeping. My dear mother was released from all her sufferings yesterday morning at ten minutes past eight. For twenty years she has suffered much affliction, but since last October it is impossible to describe her sufferings. Her pain was awful, and yet her courage failed not. Often she rejoiced in the Lord with shouts of victory, and clapping of hands, and songs of praise. But all these shouts of victory never frightened death out of the field. He marched steadily on, and captured the outworks, and entrenchments, and one fortification after another, till he got to the citadel of her heart, and then all was over. And yet she is the victor. She has had a glorious triumph. She has fought a good fight ; she has pursued her course to the end ; and she has kept the faith. Now she wears her crown, and sings the song of triumph through the blood of the Lamb.'

" O may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past ;
And, dying, find my latest foe
Under my feet at last ! "

Then shall we be eternally united and happy before the throne of God.'

He gathered the members of the family together after her funeral, and sought to maintain the family union that was in danger of being severed by her death. Speaking of that family meeting, he says : 'I have given myself afresh to God, with

every member of the family, praying that God may make us all children of His family ; that we may love and cherish each other all our days ; that God may dwell with us ; and that His cloud may lead us, and His manna feed us, until we all arrive in our Father's house above.'

His mother's piety had been so remarkable, and her life had been so holy and devoted to God, that the Wesleyans of Doncaster and Skelmanthorpe desired to recognise her worth by holding a mémorial service. Forty or fifty years ago these services were conducted with great solemnity and impressiveness, and were the means of gathering immense congregations.

As soon as arrangements could be made, the memorial service was held. Mr. Marsden insisted on preaching the sermon himself, as he said that no one else would or could do justice to his mother's sterling piety and worth. The funeral sermon was remarkably solemn and effective, and resulted in the conversion of several of his hearers.

The next few years were spent in hard and exhausting work. He took his share of the business, and attended all the fairs and markets, received orders, delivered goods, collected accounts, and worked almost day and night to promote the interests of the family. In addition to business engagements, he preached three times every Sunday, and almost every evening in the week besides. He strained his voice and relaxed his throat by incessant preaching and praying in public. He had little sleep, and less relaxation, for years. He never had a holiday or a day of rest. When he was exhausted, he refreshed himself by a change of employment.

In one of his preaching journeys he was entertained at the house of Mr. Robert Barker, a respectable farmer at Burton-on-Stather, close by the banks of the silvery Trent. Here he formed a casual acquaintance with his future wife, Miss Mary Barker, second daughter of Robert and Sarah Barker. She was about a year his senior in age, and a lady of superior talents and ability. This acquaintance soon ripened into affection, but there were two barriers to their marriage. He had a responsible position as virtual head of his own family, not relieved by the death of his mother and the second marriage of

his father. She had to consider the welfare of her father and the comfort of his home. It was not till August, 1854, that they were married, about a year after the death of her father. They were strangely unlike, and yet wonderfully fitted for each other. He was large and strong as a giant. She was below the medium height, ladylike and feminine. He was rash and impulsive. She was cool and calculating. He was a great reader. She was a thinker and a worker. He roamed abroad. She was happy and contented at home. He lived only to save souls. She kept a home for him, and ministered to his comfort and sympathised with his work. They were fitted for each other like locks and keys, or hooks and eyes. They would neither of them have done singly what they did unitedly. He was a grand man, and he had a grand wife. She toned down his extravagance, and criticised his statements, and helped to mould his opinions. If he had married her twenty years sooner, he would have been in some respects a better man ; and while the Christian Church reveres his name and rejoices in his success, her self-denial and devotedness must not be forgotten.

It was well that he married a wife with tastes and aims similar to his own. She was a class-leader and a successful worker in the Christian Church, and is deservedly esteemed for her work's sake. And she rejoiced in her husband's success, and encouraged and helped him to the utmost.

I spoke just now of her self-denial, and a little reflection will put this matter in a very clear light. Their home after marriage was in Priory Place, Doncaster, close to the Wesleyan Chapel. She had a right to his presence, and protection, and society, at all times when he was not called away from home by the claims of business. And yet she freely and willingly sacrificed her own claims that he might accept the calls of the Church. He scarcely ever spent a Sunday with her from New Year's Day to Christmas, and most of his evenings were occupied in preaching or lecturing. I have met many people who have thought what a fine thing it must be to lead the life of a popular preacher and lecturer ; but they had never seen the other side of the picture—the long journeys, the late hours,

the hardship and exposure, the irregular meals, the damp beds, and a host of other inconveniences which other men escape. But I seldom meet with any thoughtful woman who would like to marry a popular preacher and take the consequences. She would have a wholesome dread of the long, lonely evenings by her own fireside, while her husband was charming and delighting the multitude. She would picture to herself nights and days of solitude, depression and sadness, which she must endure without murmuring or complaining, for the good of others. And yet Mrs. Marsden freely and willingly agreed that his marriage should not interfere with his evangelistic work.

Shortly after his marriage he found himself in such comfortable financial circumstances that he could afford to retire from business entirely, and leave it to the other members of the family. It had long been a daydream of his to be unfettered from the cares and anxieties of business, and free to devote himself entirely to his mission work.

After much consideration and prayer, he severed his connection with his father's business, and from this time he devoted all his talents and efforts to the good of the Church. He usually left home with his carpet-bag on Saturday morning, and his wife saw him no more till the following Thursday or Friday. If possible, he would be home to meet his class on Friday, but he would be off again on another journey on the Saturday. Sometimes he took long journeys to the South of England, or some distant part of Wales, and then he would be away two or three weeks.

He would write home every day brief, affectionate letters to his wife, but she was deprived of his society and protection for the good of the Christian Church. And yet she cheerfully and contentedly accepted her lot, and discharged her duties, with a single eye to the glory of God. So these two servants of the Lord Jesus Christ patiently toiled for the Master year after year, with marvellous success and unvarying regularity.

In domestic life his loyalty to Christ and his devotion to His service were just as conspicuous as in his public ministry. Nothing could ever lead him for one hour to forget the claims of God. Religion was the chief topic of his conversation and

the great theme of his studies. He might be diverted from it for a moment or two, just as a mariner's compass may be influenced by another magnet; but he swung back again immediately to the pole-star of his soul, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A characteristic story is told of his efforts to do good both in season and out of season. Doncaster race-week is famous among sporting men all over the country, and thousands of gentlemen hire rooms for a week in the town to attend the races. There is consequently a great demand made upon the private houses in the town, as all the hotels and inns are crowded to their utmost capacity. A gentlemanly stranger rang at the door one morning, and requested the servant to ask if they could accommodate him with a bed-room and sitting-room for the race-week. Mr. Marsden, who was busy writing in the parlour, heard all that passed at the door; and when the servant brought the stranger's inquiry, he said: 'No, Mary; ask the gentleman if he ever says his prayers.'

Such random shots as these were often made a great blessing to others, and many cases have occurred where important spiritual results have followed.

During many years of his busy life at Doncaster the vicar of the parish was the Rev. C. J. Vaughan, D.D., afterwards Master of the Temple and Dean of Llandaff. Though Mr. Marsden was a decided and devoted member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society all the days of his religious life, he was a great admirer of learning and spirituality everywhere. Dr. Vaughan was his *beau idéal* of a clergyman of the Church of England; and he not only greatly admired and highly esteemed him, but he used to pray for him by name. And when honours and promotions came to the good vicar, nobody more sincerely rejoiced that Dr. Vaughan was counted worthy to be called up higher, though he was afraid that the spiritual life and power of the parish church at Doncaster would suffer by the change.

I have heard him describe Dr. Vaughan's parish work with great admiration and approval, and speak in the highest terms of his learning and piety. And I think it only fair to his memory to testify that his love for spirituality and holiness was strong enough to overleap all the bounds of sects and parties,

and to recognise a true brotherhood among the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ of every name and creed. Knowing the esteem in which Mr. Marsden held the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, I sent a copy of my earlier *Reminiscences* to him, with a request for any special information that might be in his possession; and I received from him the following courteous and kind reply :

‘LLANDAFF, June 12, 1882.

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I am grateful to you for recognising me as a friend of the late Mr. Marsden of Doncaster. I knew and respected him, but my opportunities of seeing him personally were few, and I have no such reminiscences of him as would add anything to the life-likeness of your own faithful biography.

‘I thank you much for the *instalment* which you have kindly sent me, and wish all possible success to your larger work in his memory.—Sincerely yours,

C. J. VAUGHAN.’

Mr. Marsden’s love for aggressive evangelistic work induced him to take a great interest in the origin and establishment of the Salvation Army. He went to London, and gave the Army the benefit of his experience and actual service for a short time. He generously contributed to its funds, and persuaded many of his friends to do so. He took a number of copies of the *War Cry* every week, and distributed them judiciously among those friends who would be likely to help the movement.

In one of his letters to a friend he speaks of the Rev. William Booth as ‘a spiritual child’ of his, and pleads for his friend’s support and help. I sent a copy of the letter to Mr. Booth, and received a very courteous reply. Perhaps the best way of stating the case will be the publication of the letters.

‘16, PRIORY PLACE, DONCASTER, Jan. 11, 1876.

‘MY DEAR BROTHER,—A spiritual child of mine—the Rev. W. Booth, of London, who established and has sustained a mission among the lower classes and slums and strongholds of darkness—has been many years at the work, and great good has been done. I went some years back and gave him a week ;

so I had some experience of his work. The work is sustained by voluntary subscriptions or gifts of friends. I now and then send him a subscription. I sent him one about a fortnight ago, and I named you to him. I thought the work would have your sympathy. You will excuse me naming you to him, won't you? I told him he might make use of my name to you. I enclose a paper of his, which was enclosed in a personal letter to me, thanking me for the gift, and wishing me to go and assist him when I can and as long as I can. Love to all.—Believe me your old and very affectionate friend,

'I. MARSDEN.'

'THE SALVATION ARMY HEADQUARTERS,
101, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.,
'June 5, 1882.

'DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours: I shall never forget the words I first heard from Mr. Isaac Marsden. I was walking out one evening with two Wesleyan friends at Nottingham when I was fourteen years of age. Mr. Marsden was conducting special services at the Wesleyan chapel, and at that time no one could hear him, that had any belief in the great truths of the Bible, without being deeply impressed and stimulated by him.

'We entered the chapel late—in the dusk—and I could hardly see the speaker; but just at that moment he was saying, "A soul dies every minute." The thought made me cringe, and I have little doubt that but for my two friends I should have stayed that very night and given God my heart. It was not, however, till some time after this that I decided for Christ.

'Mr. Marsden showed himself a friend to our work till the very last.—Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

'J. TAYLOR, Esq.'

The domestic peace and family blessedness of the home at Doncaster were not interrupted by any serious illness till the middle of July, 1877. Then Mr. Marsden met with an accident that caused him to be laid aside for about three months.

His devoted wife nursed him with ceaseless care and attention, but it was a sore trial to him that he was unable to follow his beloved employment. In a letter to a friend, expressing his regret that he was unable to fulfil his appointment, he says : ‘When I was a boy, I used to tie a string to a bird’s foot and hold it so that it could not fly away. Providence has now hold of me by the foot. May the Lord loose the string and let me go !’

But though the Lord did not at once loose the string and let him escape, He came into the cage to him and blessed him abundantly. The following letter testifies to the sweetness of his religious experience at that time :

‘*March 8, 1878.*

‘**MY DEAR BROTHER,**—Last July I had a fall which lamed me severely, so that I was confined in bed three weeks, with my right leg in a stock, and confined at home some thirteen weeks. I fear I shall be lame all my life, but I feel no pain, and I can walk on level ground tolerably well, and move to and fro, so that I can go out preaching, and have been east, west, north, and south. Have been little at home this year.

‘Returned to-day from Brigg Circuit, and had one of the most glorious weeks in my life. Chapel well filled every night, and Sunday and last night crowded. Many have got good. Seldom have I seen so many married people come forward without any person going to invite them. I was nearly four hours at work last night, and should have remained had I not been engaged for Sunday.

‘My affliction had its use and produced great benefit. I am not aware that I murmured a single thought. Jesus Christ was very precious. I was brought to examination and close criticism of my life. O what a Saviour I found ! Not one foot of ground had I to stand upon—no, not a grain of sand. I was saved just here : “*Jesus died FOR ME—rose again FOR ME;*” and it was all Christ ; and *Christ was all in all to me.* I was well paid for my thirteen weeks’ confinement. Jesus was very precious. The Word of God was very rich to my soul ; and I got such a lot of new sermons—they grew faster than I

could get them—but sermons of another order than I used to preach.

‘I formed the habit of praying for your family from the first, and continue it. I wonder if ever you pray for me. My prayer for you is special every day. I hope you are useful and strong to labour.

‘Remember me to your dear wife and children, and may God bless you all. Amen.—Yours very affectionately,

‘I. MARSDEN.’

About two years afterwards Mrs. Marsden was seriously ill for some weeks, to the great agony and distress of her husband; but in answer to his prayers she was restored to health and strength.

Let us now turn aside from the peaceful methodical life of the home at Doncaster to the stirring scenes of conflict with the prince of darkness. We may not go with Mr. Marsden to the battlefield, but we can take up the tidings he sends to us from the thick of the fray, and learn from them lessons of encouragement, experience, and practical wisdom.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEWS FROM THE FRONT.

FROM the time of his acceptance as a local preacher on trial in 1836, to the end of 1853, a period of seventeen years, he estimated the number of sermons preached by him at 3370, or nearly four sermons a week on the average. This estimate does not include his addresses, speeches, and lectures on missions, temperance, education, and other public questions.

When he was away from home on his missionary enterprises, he was in the habit of writing occasionally to his friends, giving brief descriptions of his work. These old letters, scattered up and down the country, are the best records of his labours. They are short descriptive messages, full of cheering facts, and now and then containing valuable hints to Christian workers. Occasionally he gives a brief summary of his year's work, or a list of his future engagements.

So far as I have been able to verify the statements made in these old letters, they are simple statements of fact, as seen and recorded at the time. They are free from exaggeration, pride, and boastfulness, and were never intended for publication ; but they are such faithful and graphic accounts of the work done that I cannot improve them.

I will therefore stand aside and let him tell the story in his own words.

‘DONCASTER, December 31, 1854.

‘Glory be to God, I am yet alive. I am still on my way to the kingdom.

‘This year I have preached at Askern, Barrow (Lincoln), Bawtry, Barrowford, Blackpool, Brierley (Barnsley), Burslem, Castleford, Cotgrave (Notts), Chesterfield, Conisborough,

Cuckney, Douglas (Isle of Man), Edenfield (Haslingden), Farnsfield, Grassley, Haworth, Hatfield Woodhouse, Howden, Horncastle, Hyde, Kneesall, Kirton, Kearsley (Bolton), Kimberworth, Keighley, Market Rasen, Mow Cop, Masborough, Manchester, Maltby, New Mills, North Kelsey, Padiham, Preston, Rough Lee, Scrooby, Skelmanthorpe, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Spalding, Thorne, Tunstall, Tottington (Bury), Tickhill, Ulceby, Warrington, and Wigan.'

'MORECAMBE, June 24, 1855.

'Preached here from Zech. iv. 10, and conducted open-air services on the beach. The Society here was very low, and one of the ministers proposed to abandon the place altogether and spend no more time or labour on such a sterile soil. But the Lord did not despise the day of small things. He looked upon us and helped us, and many were converted, and the fire spread to other parts of the circuit.'

'DONCASTER, December 30, 1856.

'Another busy year has fled and left its record of work at Alston, Allendale, Batley, Barrow (Chester), Burton, Bingham, Barringham, Bonley, Barnsley, Barnethy, Blaxton, Bardney, Cheadle, Caton (Lancaster), Claypole, Cockermouth, Doncaster, Ferry Bridge, Goole, Garrigill, Gainsborough, Haltwhistle, Gelsland Spa, Houghton-le-Spring, Hampoe, Lazenby, Ludgrave, Monk Fryston, Maryport, Mellor Brook, Moss, Newark, New Lenton, New Holland, New Botle, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Selby, Swannington, Thornciffe (Sheffield), Tuxford, Woodhouse (Leeds), and many other places. The Lord has made bare His holy arm most gloriously, and hundreds of sinners have been saved, many believers have been sanctified, and backsliders have been reclaimed.'

'I went some time ago to one of the most beautiful country chapels in England. I preached twice in connection with the opening services, but we had no collections, as the chapel was paid for and free from debt before it was opened. Another remarkable thing about it was that it was a chapel without a

Church. There was a local preacher in the village, who holds a respectable position, and who earnestly desires to have both a chapel and a Church. Money will build or buy a chapel, so they raised a very beautiful building free from debt. I spent a week with them, and while I was there the Lord Jesus Christ raised up a Church for the chapel. So they will have both now. Glory to God for ever and ever! Amen.'

'The glory of our Sabbath at Darlington was such as I cannot describe. In the evening there was a regular breaking up of Satan's camp. On our side there was no lack of help. All were willing to put their necks to their work. The meeting last night was a complete triumph. The crowd was very great, and the excitement at a high pitch. O for more of Christ's spirit, and more glorious views of His word and His works!'

'My visits of late have been gloriously owned of God. At Dunstable the Lord saved by wholesale, and there was a glorious moving in the valley of dry bones. I have good news from my last visit to the Norwich Circuit. None of the friends expected the coming of Christ in such a way. I found by my correspondent's letter that they were cold, and I told him in my reply that I could not find a spark of fire in his letter. I had never seen him, but I formed a right opinion of him. I went to chapel feeling in an unusual degree the power of God, and during prayer the heavens were opened. While I was preaching, there was a cry for mercy, and I was enabled to summon all there and then to surrender to God. Many yielded up body and soul to God, and all trembled, and not a soul went out of the service. There was such a feeling of solemn awe resting upon us that one of them said he expected something supernatural coming. The conquest was great. The triumph of the Lamb over sin and Satan will be ever remembered by those who were there. They yielded, and heartily welcomed the coming of Christ. They worked with a will, and God blessed them. I left them happy in God, and with the fire rekindled. To God be all the glory for ever and ever!'

'Good news from Birmingham. I had a working, sweating

day with my three services on Sunday. In the afternoon the chapel was crowded with children and friends. Satan fought hard on Sunday, and our side did not fight well; yet a great number were seeking mercy, and several were saved. Last night we had great liberty. A relative of yours was put under arrest, and came up like a child leaning on me, as if too weak to walk. The arrows of the Almighty had pierced him, and it was a sight to see his poor weeping face. O how he begged for help and cried for mercy! About ten o'clock he found mercy and went home rejoicing. This will be good news to you and your good wife. Write to him and bid him God speed.'

'I returned from Lowestoft last night, where I gave them eleven nights in succession. The Lord has been saving by wholesale. Praise God for ever and ever. Amen. I have got good news from my last visits to Lancaster and Morecambe, where about two hundred have been added to the Society. The blessing of the Lord has also rested on the friends at Maryport, where over one hundred new members have been gathered in since my services there; and at Alston and Gateshead similar results are reported. All glory to the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

'To-morrow I am off to Wakefield for the Sunday and three following days. A few months ago I had a glorious visit to High Wycombe, and after that I spent a few days in London and preached at Kentish Town chapel. The Lord was with us gloriously.'

'The Lord has been with me in preaching. Since I wrote you last, I had glorious success in two places. At one place a young woman belonging to a wicked family was with us and got good. Her wicked mother that night, while we were at chapel, was going to commit suicide, but looking down saw her child smiling, and that smile completely disarmed her of her purpose.

'I feel a settled conviction of the necessity of a full salvation always, especially for pulpit work and the permanent revival of the Churches. The Church has for a long time been going down to the world, until the distinction has been nearly lost.

The birthday of the Church was the day of Pentecost—the festival of the Holy Ghost. It is not the external form and custom, but the Holy Ghost that makes the Church really Christian. He is the soul that fills and animates her, and combines all her individual members into the unity of one body. Look at Christ's prayer, John xvii. 21-23, and try to imagine such a Church—without jealousy—demonstrative in its sympathy—universal in its purity—the success of one the joy of all. Then think of the line of "apostolic succession," and you will find it typical of false lines in all the Churches—lines of prejudice, jealousy, pride, self-glorification, ambition, social position, obstinate unbelief, and hundreds of other lines besides. Let us follow Christ, and we shall see how He caught the disciples drawing lines who should be the greatest, and He rebuked them. There is but one line that surrounds and binds us all together into one.

"What do you think about it? Shall we try to set a better example? Let you and me begin just now and try, and we are sure to succeed by taking hold of Christ. May the Lord help us!"

'December 2, 1864.

"My visit to Darlington was a very great triumph. Christ was Conqueror. Glory to God for ever and ever! High and low, rich and poor, were brought to Christ. It was also a very great triumph in money. My dear friend there is like yourself. He looked high—high as God's throne. He had faith. He opened his mouth wide, and spoke with a full assurance: "We shall have a good time," until the people began to believe it themselves. He got a good bill—large like his faith—and the people came forward and gave liberally. They came from twenty miles round to help us.

"All the prophets and apostles were enterprising men, and we must imitate them if we mean to be successful. Pray for the Lord to be with me and preserve me and give me every day ten thousand times more love and knowledge.

"Will you inquire if I left a silk pocket-handkerchief in the room where I slept? My wife scolds me about losing my

handkerchiefs ; she says two more are missing. I should buy about twenty every year to keep me going.

‘ Better lose all my luggage than lose my soul.’

‘ I arrived at home all safe, but left my walking-stick and a very nice silk handkerchief in the carriage. I felt sorry about it, for I was determined to lose nothing. The walking-stick cannot be replaced, for there is a little history about it. It is associated with Green Rock Cottage, and I wanted to keep it. Well, I can get over it by saying it was only a bit of wood, and the handkerchief only a few ounces of silk. You know what the fox said when it could not get the grapes.

‘ I had a regular write last night till about one o’clock this morning. I was drawn out on the text : “ Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean men.” I wrote quite a little sermon, and it was a treat to spend an evening with my manuscript book.

‘ Accept of my thanks for your great kindness and care for me while at your house. I love your family very much. I felt your house a sweet home. The Lord has honoured you in the gift of such a wife : “ she is a crown to her husband.” May the Lord continue her strength, and bless her a thousand times more than ever ! May God bless your dear children ! Give my love to the family.’

‘ SHERBORN, DORSET, Feb. 9, 1865.

‘ I came into this part thirteen days ago, and leave for Doncaster to-morrow. I have been told that “ the people of the South are not to be moved like those in the North.” Those who say so know nothing about it. If a preacher comes here with that notion, and accommodates himself to their stillness, he will always see them still. Then the destroyer will take advantage of his stillness, and take his congregation as stealthily as a tiger stealing a flock of sheep. But if the Lord bids them of the North “ give up,” and tells the South to “ keep not back,” but “ bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth,” they will respond. The South has

yielded, and brought her sons and daughters from far; yea, such as were far from God have been brought nigh by the blood of the Lamb. These quiet people have been made to weep, and pray, and cry, and shout; nay, some of them have been made to dance for joy. I have been a week at Yeovil, and had a glorious outpouring of God's Spirit. The ocean burst upon the people, and the glory of God was like a mighty flowing stream in every direction. Teachers, scholars, husbands, wives, old and young, and a host of backsliders were saved.

'Is there not sin in cultivating a fear of offending a certain class of wealthy people who are quiet, but whose stillness is spiritual death? I would rather be the brother of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, than half-cousin to Amaziah, the priest of Beth-el, who accused Amos of conspiracy, saying, "The land is not able to bear all his words" (Amos vii. 10); and, "Prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it is the king's chapel" (verse 13). When chapels become sacred to man's ideal notions rather than to God's glory in the salvation of sinners, then we may expect a reminder from the Lord that the pride of our heart hath deceived us.'

'RUNCORN, January 18, 1865.

'Came to Frodsham (Runcorn) last Saturday, and have been preaching every night since except Saturday. The glory of God is with us like a flowing stream among the Gentiles. The work has been great at Frodsham. Some of the friends called it "one of the wonders of the world for the Lord to save souls at Frodsham." The glory of God came into the midst of us at the services on Sunday, and mighty is the work of the Lord. The congregations, I am told, were far greater than the most popular preachers in the Connexion gather here. Some of the rich and wise do not understand why it is so: perhaps they attribute it to the ignorance of the people, that they should come and hear a man of no education, but of self-application. The Scriptures are wonderfully correct in their minute description of human nature. The words uttered by Paul in reference to the Greeks are true in reference to some of our wealthy,

would-be-wise Wesleyans of to-day : “ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh should glory in His presence ” (1 Cor. i. 25-29).

‘ The Lord has hold of the people, and they come from all quarters. We are looking for glorious things to-night. Home to-morrow for a jubilee meeting. I have been working hard enough of late for two or three men. Praise God for ever for the wonderful strength He gives me.’

‘ UNDERCLIFF, BRADFORD, October 25, 1865.

‘ I came here for Sunday and am off to-morrow. The power and the glory of God rested upon me, and the effects I cannot describe. Last night there would be forty seeking Jesus, and many found Him. I had mighty power in the first prayer : sometimes it was awful—the glory of God so filled the place that I felt my very blood run chill. I told the congregation they must not move a hair’s-breadth from the Cross, and they must keep to it all through the discourse. The word was with power, and the people bowed to the word like saplings to the blast of the wind. It was not man : no, no ; it was the mighty power of God. To Him be all the glory !

‘ Last week at Coseley, in the Tipton Circuit, Christ was with us gloriously every night. At Carr Lane, Bilston, on the Tuesday night, the Lord broke them down wholesale. The members looked nonplussed, and either could not pray or would not. Had it not been for foreign help, I do not know what would have been done. O never-to-be-forgotten time ! All glory to God and the Lamb for ever !

‘ I feel God has called me to this great work, and fields far and wide are opening out. There is a prospect of a rich

harvest. May the Lord help me and sustain me, and multiply His power with my weakness and unworthiness. "Am not I a brand plucked from the burning?" O how hell-deserving! but the Lord delighteth in mercy. Pray for me.'

' HALIFAX, November 2, 1865.

'This is one of the most glorious weeks I ever had in my life. Heaps upon heaps are the slain of the Lord. The chapel on Sunday night would have some fifteen hundred people in it, and only few went out when the prayer-meeting commenced. I had before me the vision in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters of Ezekiel, and I was enabled to plead them, and the Lord answered them.

'The congregations are large every night, and to all appearance there are scores of penitents. O what glorious times! I have been enabled to get them to Christ, and we had some grand cases of conversion. One man, when he had found salvation, threw his arms about me and kissed me, and shook hands with his friends, and confessed Christ to the people. He is an intelligent man who has travelled much. His wife came the night after, seeking for mercy. All sorts of people came, old and young; the fine folks and the rough folks came, and the Lord turns none empty away. O praise God for ever and ever! Amen.

'All the preachers in the circuit work well with me and stay till the last. I like them to be there, and then they both see and hear and rejoice and become believers. There is another benefit: they will be able to contradict many false statements that get abroad even from a class of Methodists, that ought to be examples of truth.

'We are looking for glorious things to-night. Sunday, I am for Suffolk.'

' DONCASTER, December 31, 1865.

'My mission this year has been to Ackworth, Alkborough, Burneston (Bedale), Burnley, Bedale, Broughton (Brigg), Carr Lane (Bilston), Crewe, Coseley, Coningsby, Darlington, Earlsheaton, Farsley (Bradford), Frodsham, Guisborough,

Halifax, Haughton (Hyde), High Wycombe, Holmfirth, Hemingway (Horncastle), Horncastle, Leek, Milborne Port (Dorset), Mildenhall (Suffolk), Nantwich, Runcorn, Scunthorpe, Sowerby Bridge, Scamblesby, Silsden, Sherborne (Dorset), Telford, Tockwith, Undercliff Woodhouse, Wellington (Salop), Wolverhampton, Wadworth, Woodhall (Horncastle), Wigan, and Yeovil.'

'September 27, 1867.

'I am filled up every week this year. Dunstable, Crook (Bishop Auckland), Sheffield, Rochdale, Accrington, Belper, Mansfield, Bigley, Lofthouse, Driffield, Tow Law, and Richmond. I see I have overlooked December 15th. I thought it had gone with the rest, but I have several invitations for it. If I offer it to you first, you must say yes or no by next post. If you don't take it, I shall give it to Dudley.

'I have had some glorious times of late; souls have been saved by scores. May Providence give you as much of the earth as you can carry with safety; and may the Holy Spirit give you as much of heaven as shall make you feel that this earth is not your home!'

'SHERBURN, April 22, 1868.

'Crook in the Bishop Auckland Circuit surpassed all I think I ever saw. I preached out of doors and lectured to the miners in the streets, and then adjourned to the chapel for service. Hundreds of roughs who had never been inside a Wesleyan chapel in their lives followed us and listened eagerly to the word. There was tremendous excitement among the pitmen; thousands of them came to see what we had up. Sherburn is a mining village in a district where Lord Durham has about thirty coal-pits, and from all the villages round people came in great numbers to our services. Hundreds of souls were saved at my last visit in October, 1867; the chapel became too small for the congregations, and is now being enlarged, and they have added three hundred members to the Society, besides more than doubling the quarterly income. As usual, the Lord is with us at Sherburn, and souls are being saved every night.

'My visit to Welshpool and Oswestry was a God-send. At Welshpool they had had no souls saved for years, so that very few young people were members of Society. Some had never seen such a work before. I have lately visited Penrith, Skipton, and Wigan, and have had glorious times, and souls saved. At Wigan I preached out of doors twice. You will be aware of the great strike of colliers there. I had mighty times, but I had to pay for it by an intensified cold in my chest and throat. I am just getting better of my cold, though I do not say I paid too dearly for my success. We got a number of the very worst English and Irish roughs to the chapel and the communion rail, and great good was done. I preached to them in the market-place on "a great strike," and got many of them that night to strike against drink and the devil, and begin to serve God.'

'SHIPLEY, January 13, 1868.

'Was at Hill Top last week. I left on Friday morning, fairly done up with labour and excitement after working three or four hours every night. The last night was one continued excitement and shout of triumph from the first prayer to near eleven o'clock. About forty penitents came up on Sunday night, and almost as many every night. I met numbers who were saved at my last visit to Hill Top, and who are walking worthily.

'I came to Shipley last Saturday, and leave on Friday. The work here is very glorious. At least thirty came up on Sunday, and many were saved, and we had several last night. To God be all the glory!'

'DONCASTER, Dec. 14, 1870.

'I returned to-day from the old city of Ely, where I have been preaching for ten days. The whole city has been roused and excited, and numbers were saved. I visited the different hotels, and invited the commercial travellers who were staying there to come to our services. Twenty-five of them accepted my invitation, and almost emptied two of the largest hotels for two nights. One of the innkeepers said he wished the chapel walls would fall upon us, because we got his customers.

At last he came himself and got good. The old cathedral and High Church party came to see what was to do. They had never so seen or heard of revival work before. One aged sinner of eighty-four got converted, and many more of all classes. A very great revival has begun there. Praise God !'

'DONCASTER, December 31, 1870.

'My engagements this year have been at Balby, Biggleswade, Beeston, Beckingham, Birstal, Barnsley, Bigley, Bramham, (Tadcaster), Cleethorpes, Crook, Coxhoe, Carr Lane (Bilston), Clitheroe, Darlington, Dudley, Darnall, Elsecar (Wath), Ely, Gateshead, Grimsby, Humberstone, Haxby, Keal (Spilsby), Keighley, Market Rasen, Marley Hill, Nantwich, Pocklington, Pontefract, Rawmarsh, Rook Hope (Walsingham), Sheffield, Sunderland, Scunthorpe, Stotfold (Biggleswade), Sheriff Hutton, Todmorden, Tattershall Bridge, Warble (Rochdale), Wimblebury, Wolsingham, Widnes, and York.'

'RAWTENSTALL, January 27, 1873.

'I had a grand day here on Sunday. I preached three times, and we had a grand breaking down of opposition. There would be thirty or forty penitents at the communion rail on Sunday night, and on Monday about eighty, with nearly as many last night. The work of the Lord has laid hold of all classes; the rich, and well-to-do, and independent, as well as the poor. Young and old are the saved of the Lord.

'The work of the Lord is *great*—very great. It would be in vain to try to describe it. The power I have in preaching is almighty power, given by God to feeble man. The work will be great to-night. O how glorious I felt Jesus Christ ! Help, help to shout "Hallelujah !" for ever and ever. Amen.'

Mr. W. H. Roberts, of Callington, Cornwall, gives the following account of Mr. Marsden's last two visits to Cornwall :

'In the spring of 1880, Mr. Marsden was invited by the trustees and leaders to conduct special services at Callington. The Church was in a very cold, indifferent state, and we all felt the need of a spiritual awakening. On Sunday he preached

two impressive sermons, and laid particular stress on the necessity of unity in the Church, and the importance of holy living, and mighty faith in the promises of God. He introduced his sweet strain, "Hallelujah," which was sung repeatedly during his stay. On the Monday evening he gave us a very powerful discourse on "Pentecost." The power of God was evidently present. A very hallowed and gracious influence pervaded the meeting, but there was terrible resistance on the part of sinners. He perceived a want of co-operation on the part of some who were members, and he feared that they were guilty of unbelief. Faithfully and solemnly he warned them not to be a hinderance to the revival of God's work, and told them plainly that unless they held up his hands and were united one and all in the work, he would go home at the end of the week.

"Then followed a heart-searching time. Many consecrated themselves afresh to God, and all seemed in earnest about the salvation of souls. For several nights this quickening and awakening of the Church continued, but it was not till the following Sunday that the full showers of blessings began to descend. The windows of heaven were opened, and there was such a melting influence that stubborn wills were subdued and hard hearts were broken. As cries for mercy came from different parts of the chapel, the dear old saint was overjoyed. Tears of gladness trickled down his cheeks as he shouted, "Hallelujah! Glory to God!" The work continued, and many were added to the Church.

"In the spring of 1881 he paid us another visit, when we were favoured with similar results. Souls were saved, back-sliders were reclaimed, and believers were sanctified. His stay was shortened by news of the dangerous illness of Mrs. Marsden. Immediately on receiving a telegram he left us for home, beseeching us to pray earnestly for his wife's recovery. Again and again appeals came through the post, asking us to pray for her; and we heartily responded to his appeals.

"It would be impossible to describe adequately the good resulting directly and indirectly from his visits, in the awakening of the Church, the quickening of the leaders, and the salvation of sinners."

Another esteemed correspondent writes :

‘When the Reformers left the Wesleyan chapel at Blackburn, and built a new place of worship for themselves, they took more than three-fourths of the congregation with them. Those who remained faithful to the old Connexion were burdened with serious liabilities ; and seeing no way out of their difficulties, they sent for Mr. Marsden. He met the children that were left in the Sunday-school, and by his kindness and liberality he soon gained their affection and their co-operation. He requested each child to get one person to come and hear him preach, and persuaded a few singers to sing for him. He then went and preached in front of the Town Hall, and gathered a great crowd. They sang a hymn and marched in procession to the large deserted Wesleyan chapel, which was soon packed full of people. He preached his famous sermon on “Pulling them out of the Fire,” and the excitement of the penitent sinners was so great that he could not finish his sermon. The service was turned into a huge prayer-meeting, and scores were converted. From these new converts a new Church was formed. The meetings were continued with such success that we more than made up the numbers we had lost by the Reform agitation, and we have prospered ever since.’

Again I learn :

‘He was invited to the Somerton and South Petherton Circuits. At the latter place the whole town was stirred by his energy and devotedness. He visited the people, relieved the poor, prayed with the labourers in the streets, and spoke to everybody he met about their souls. The chapel was crowded, and many sought and found mercy ; among them a gentleman who is now one of the most influential Methodists in the Circuit.

‘At Somerton the chapel was thronged every night with excited crowds, and very many were converted, and some remain in the Society to this day and are our most useful members. So great was the excitement that a young gentleman in the town brought several of his companions to see the fun and make as much sport out of it as he could. But the Spirit

of God arrested him, and he remained to pray, and afterwards became a faithful servant of Christ. Among the scoffers was an infidel from London ; but he was converted, and about a year afterwards he died in the full assurance of faith.

‘These successes almost emptied the public-houses, and so enraged the publicans that some lewd fellows of the baser sort burnt Mr. Marsden’s effigy, together with that of a lady who had given him great assistance in the work ; and whilst these two vile caricatures of God’s servants were burning, the drunken mob sang the “Hallelujah Chorus.”

‘Still the work of the Lord prospered, and many of his spiritual children are alive to this day.’

CHAPTER XVII.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR YOUNG PREACHERS.

IT was always a pleasure to Mr. Marsden to give hints and helps to young preachers at the beginning of their career. Many of his old letters testify to the interest he took in preparing his spiritual children for activity and usefulness. They abound with witty and wise counsel gleaned from his wide and varied experience. I will therefore introduce him to my readers as a fatherly adviser and counsellor, and allow him to state his opinions in his own words.

‘ 16, PRIORY PLACE, DONCASTER, October 2, 1878.

‘ DEAR ARTHUR,—The little book I have sent you is of great value to young men who wish to be well grounded in the Truth, and to be useful. Read it over and over again, and make its truths the food of your memory. You might read ten great books, and not be so well instructed as this little book will instruct you. I wrote down all the doctrines and the Scripture proofs, and used it to prepare for my own examination as a local preacher. If you work at it for twelve months, it will be a good beginning. I do not mean you should read nothing else, but by reading a page every day and getting the doctrines into your memory you will be ready for the questions that may be put to you.

‘ It will help you in your sermons, but you must choose suitable subjects, such as repentance, faith, and justification. Now don’t weary in this way. Work at these truths, and read and write for seven years, and you will become a master. Be not too eager to run at first, but do a little every day.

Divide your Bible into three parts, and begin your systematic reading at Genesis, Proverbs, and Matthew ; and as it interests you, mark the passage, and write from what interests you. When you have filled your Bible with marks, it will be worth twenty times more to you than ever.

‘When you hear a sermon, by all means take notice of it ; and if it is a good one, write it down, and improve upon it. Work up new sermons out of old ones. Do your best. Lose no time. Remember that if you lose ten minutes in a day, you are wasting 3650 golden minutes in a year. If you write a page a day, it will be 365 pages in a year. I have done much more than that on an average for forty-four years. When you preach, be in earnest, and make a good application. Then at the close come down and begin a prayer-meeting. Give out a verse or two, and pray in right good earnest, and always to the point. Have a penitent form out, and invite the friends to help you. Have no silly shame about you—be above it. It may do for a girl of eighteen years of age. Pray much. Pray in private four times a day. Now, my dear friend, be “out and out,” until people say you are mad. May God bless you every way !—Believe me yours truly,

‘I. MARSDEN.’

‘DONCASTER, August 11, 1879.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—Whatever are you up to ? I hear not a word from you. Are you walking, or running, or flying ? The Conference have been reducing the number of candidates from the district meetings, and there are scores who will not be accepted. You must spare neither labour nor pains to be useful at home, and your way will open out somewhere or somehow. Go straight to work at the task that lies nearest your hand. That is how I began. A minister asked me if I had any thoughts about going into the ministry, but I gave him no encouragement but practical work. Many were saved in our circuit, and some of the fruit is remaining to this day. Then other circuits opened out to me afterwards. It was not all smooth sailing ; for I met with opposition here and there, sometimes by great men, and sometimes by little men. But

I still kept going on, and sticking to my work. If a person shut up my way here, another was opened there.

‘Never think of leaving your duty because of opposition, but be all the more determined to keep fighting your way. Never die half-hearted or cold-hearted; and when you are knocked down, get up and go at it again and again. Aim at success, and take with you Jesus, and He will help you. The preacher that offends no one is not a successful man. A man that is in earnest and in the thick of the combat, resolved on victory, has little or no time to measure his steps to an inch. A man that preaches nice, pretty, flowery, showy sermons need take no fire-arms with him. You go out with your fire-arms and the power of the Holy Ghost, and you will conquer.

‘The Lord never intended me for a travelling preacher. I have been more successful in my own way perhaps by a hundred times than if I had been one. I have many travelling preachers and missionaries now out in the work.

‘Work away. Be in earnest: watch and pray, and look to heaven for help. May God bless you.—Yours truly,

‘I. MARSDEN.’

‘DONCASTER, August 20, 1879.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do not know whether you have been examined for the Plan or not. You were on trial, and I should like to see a Plan. I would like you to preach next Plan double appointments, and be out at least every other Sunday, so as to make you preach about thirteen times in a quarter. It is a sad affair when preachers just come and preach a fine butterfly sermon, and then fly away like a butterfly.

‘The work of “preaching” is the most sacred calling in the universe. Jesus Christ Himself was a preacher. Did He employ His disciples to go out repeating nice discourses? They were sent to cast out devils, and preach the Gospel, and they did as they were told. This is the true genius of Pentecost, and its symbol was the tongue of fire. This tongue of fire is the weapon of conquest, and its glory is that it is the message of Heaven.

“Those preachers who say they “do not believe in excitement and great revivals” proclaim their unbelief in Christianity and their ignorance of the work of God. What would such a preacher do if his neighbour’s property were on fire, and the family in danger of perishing in the flames? If he could go and preach to the sleeping inmates of the burning dwelling without being excited, it would serve him right to throw the burning embers upon him and burn his folly out of him. There are four great objects in the Bible that are enough to excite the universe : *sin—hell—heaven—and redemption.* They do excite heaven, and hell, and the Lamb on the throne. Methodism began with freedom on earth, salvation in heaven, or perdition in hell ; and unless we follow in the wake of our fathers, we are traitors to our country, our consciences, our God, and to the ^{True} Gospel which is intrusted to our keeping. “Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel ” (1 Cor. ix. 16).

‘Lukewarm professors in many cases help on the works of darkness. Go you straight to your work, and dip your sword in the fire. Go work and fight. A regular good battle will do you good, and opposition will strengthen you.—Your very affectionate friend,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘HEXHAM, February 12, 1867.

‘MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I rejoice that you have been able to take your stand on the most elevated and sacred spot in the universe—the pulpit. May you live long to occupy it with great power and success! Glory to the Lamb for the victory given you over Satan in “pulling sinners out of the fire!” Pull them out by dozens and by scores. The enemy has had his share a thousand years ago.

‘The work is glorious here, and Satan is in a terrific fury. Roman Catholics and all sorts come, and the chapel on Sunday was crowded. O how Satan raged in the very sanctuary ! Yet God gave us the victory. The town is in a tempest, and the spray flies every way. The excitement is deep as hell and high as heaven, and God’s hosts come from every quarter to our help.

‘The Sovereign of the Universe has declared war against universal wrong, mischief, ignorance, wretchedness, and sin in all its forms. O if the Church would at once fall in with this proclamation, and all its commanders, officers, and rank and file go forth to battle, we should hear of wars, conquests, revolutions, and triumphs far and wide. It is possible, and it ought to be done. O for a Pentecost again ! May you be a faithful and successful preacher !

‘About six weeks ago I was at Staith, a place on a very rocky and dangerous part of the coast, and there I learned a lesson for the Church and for myself. A Swedish vessel bound for Newcastle was wrecked upon this rocky coast, and hundreds of villagers ran to the rescue. Rockets were fired, the vessel was crossed by the ropes, the lifeboat was sent out, and nine lives were saved. There was no time for trifling or arguing ; the people were terribly in earnest till the last man was rescued ; and as soon as they heard that all were saved, they joined in a grand shout of joy. What a lesson for preachers to fire their rockets across the human wrecks, and save those who are ready to perish !

‘Among my latest converts is an old sea-captain who spent forty years on the sea, and now he has cast anchor within the veil and got saved. The captain is all alive, and is continually praising God and making His mercies known to his friends.

‘May God bless you abundantly and make you very useful ! —Yours affectionately,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘MY DEAR SIR,—It may be difficult for me to give you advice as to your future programme. I have felt what you feel when I was young in experience and wanted to extend my sphere of usefulness ; but I was bound by Providence within ordinary bounds. I thought, if ever at liberty under certain circumstances, I would then take wings. I see now Providence was wiser in this respect, and I stuck to business, for I had great responsibilities hanging upon me. But the Lord owned my labours wherever I went in our circuit, and as circumstances opened out into other circuits I followed on.

‘Then I gave myself to hard and persevering study, pre-

paring my head with information from various sources, scarcely letting five minutes pass away uselessly. I had always a book in my hand. I seldom went a journey on business but I read if weather permitted. I have gone thousands of miles riding, reading, and driving.

'I knew a young man, a draper, in circumstances like yours, who felt he should like to be off into the work. He went out as a hired local preacher, while his wife kept the shop. He prepared for examination to go out into the ministry, but did not pass the district meeting. My advice to him was, "Keep to your business, and make the best of yourself." He lived to repent that he did not take my advice.

'Now I would say to you, so far as I can see, Make the very best of your business. Make every penny into a pound, and prepare your head and heart for every useful purpose. Stick to your business; for there is as much religion in business as in a class-meeting. I never felt happier than when I was employed fully in business. Business is a school—at least I found it so. "Hold the fort;" be "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Be useful and follow the openings of Providence.

'May God bless you.—Yours affectionately,

'I. MARSDEN.'

'MY DEAR BROTHER,—I hope your head is above your shoulders; and your heart a thousand degrees above being "just warm;" and your tongue on fire when it is wanted in its highest and holiest exercises; and your body well, and able to sustain all your engagements in life. Then you will keep having good times, and shouting, "Hallelujah. Praise the Lord for ever and ever! Amen."

'Let us ever keep to the Strong for strength—the all-cleansing blood—this or nothing: this and everything. This will conquer a thousand hells. Without this, the shadow of the devil will conquer us. The devil wants me every day, but through Christ I say, "No, the devil shall not have me one day." Then in his rage he will either nip, or scratch, or bite, or worry at me, or he will throw dust at me as black as soot.

‘Satan shall not have all his own way. No! Jesus conquers all. Hallelujah.—Believe me yours affectionately,

‘I. MARSDEN.’

‘MY DEAR BROTHER,—You cannot serve God and mammon. If you will preach the Gospel with all plainness and simplicity, the world and false professors will be up in arms against you. They say you are “too noisy,” “too demonstrative,” “beside yourself,” and “crazed.”’

‘Let us keep up the old-fashioned revivals, and get sinners to confess Christ publicly. A man is no real penitent unless he is willing before the congregation to go over to Christ. We have all been public sinners and not ashamed of it; but when the devil sees that one of his subjects is wanting to leave him, he comes as an angel of light and says: “Don’t expose yourself; do it snugly and nicely; though you have been bold for me, yet you must not be bold for Christ.” The woman that touched the hem of Christ’s garment came modestly behind Him and sought to get a blessing secretly, but He exposed her faith. It was not to be hid.

‘For this the world will call us “mad.” There is not only a “mad zeal” in serving Christ and in carrying men out of themselves, but there is a worse kind of madness—lukewarmness, supineness, and disbelief. Many read that Christ was born in a stable and laid in a manger, but they never go to see Him. If they could read that He was born in a palace, there would be cheap trips to the place, and the rich would go and offer their gifts. But Christianity remains unaltered. It never adapts itself to foolish notions or false theories.

‘Let us keep to the old-fashioned Gospel. Good-bye. God bless you.—Yours affectionately,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘DONCASTER, January 24, 1857.

‘MY DEAR SIR,—The Lord has begun a good work among your people; may it be carried on for ever! But if the work is to prosper, it must have your co-operation and help.

‘1. The leaders must set a good example. See Paul’s example,
1 Thess. ii. 10, and reflect that you are to be an example in

your life and character. You are a professed Wesleyan class-leader. As a leader, your duty is to call over the names of your members every week, and contribute according to your means, and call upon others to do so. If you refuse to obey this rule, you have no right to be a leader, and the sooner you leave the better.

'2. If you refuse to contribute or co-operate in a wrong temper and spirit, you give the people a proof that you are no Christian.

'3. If you are a Christian and wish to remain a Wesleyan Methodist, reproof will be as excellent oil upon your head, and you will say: "Teach me the good and right way, and I will walk in it."

'4. It is no new thing to call the names of members over; Mr. Wesley established it himself.

'5. I hope you will take advice, and do that which you are morally bound to do, or leave the Society. Just one word of warning. *This is God's cause;* and if you do anything in spirit or conduct that will injure this work, God will see to it; and you may fall into His hands in a moment when you are not aware of it, and have to weep bitterly for your folly.

'Good bye. God bless you.—Believe me yours affectionately,
I. MARSDEN.'

'DONCASTER, April 25, 1856.

'MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—You have now become a policeman of Jesus Christ, and His service is the noblest and highest duty on earth. Your enemy—the great adversary of God and man—will now give you the meeting. Because you are the Lord's servant, you are his great enemy, and he will attack you.

'Be watchful about little things. A thief will not send you word when he is coming to rob your house, and he may not thunder at your doors to break them down, but he will come in stealthily at some unfastened window, or weak, unguarded place. Thousands of Christians have been robbed and plundered and murdered by neglecting little things. When Gulliver went

to the land of little folks, they trembled when they saw him awake and moving; for they said, "He is a giant." But unfortunately for Gulliver, he fell asleep, and the satirist says that the little folks tied every hair of his head to so many separate wooden pins driven into the ground, so that when he awoke he was at their mercy. So the little things in life have bound many a strong man and prepared him as a victim for the great destroyer. There is no safety with sin. Omission of duty will lead to the commission of sin. A nettle root won't sting you, but a nettle will. Plant the root, and the nettle will grow. Omit a duty—sleep a moment, and the enemy will plant the root of a bad principle which will grow and reproduce itself till it fills your heart and stings you with eternal remorse. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

'Now take a few words of advice, and if you diligently attend to them, you will not fail to secure a place before the throne of God.

'1. Wisely consider and diligently employ proper means for the establishment of your Christian character.

'2. Let your standard of conduct and your aims in life be elevated and commanding.

'3. Arm yourself with firmness and abiding resolution, setting your face as a flint onwards.

'4. Let your intercourse be with those of established virtue and intelligence.

'5. Should you decide to marry, choose a partner for life who has first chosen Christ. Moral excellence is to be sought first. God and angels respect it. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

'6. Forget not your dependence on God, and do not shirk your own responsibility.

'If these remarks contribute in the least to your spiritual prosperity and happiness, I shall be well rewarded, and a letter from you at some future period would give the humble writer no little satisfaction.—Yours truly,

'I. MARSDEN.'

' 16, PRIORY PLACE, DONCASTER, May 11, 1880.

' MY DEAR BROTHER,—May all the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ be yours for ever and ever! Amen and amen.

' Shall we live while we live? Or shall we die while we live? Which shall it be?

' I once read of dead men manning a ship, dead men pulling the ropes, dead men steering, dead men spreading the sails. What an influence it had upon me! I thought of dead men in the pulpit, dead men on the Plan, dead men leading the classes, dead men teaching the Sunday-school, dead men conducting family prayer, and alas! dead men by hundreds hearing the word and yet acting as if alive.

' Shall we then be counted among the dead men? O no; we must be counted among the living—among the higher-life men. A man of real life will look alive and speak a living language. His prayers will have fire enshrined in them, and will have wings of fire, which will rise to heaven and return with answers before he rises from his knees. But the wings of a dead man's prayers are of ice, which will freeze him fast under the wings of death.

' In all our duties we must be living men; overcoming difficulties and impossibilities; and not saying, "I cannot," "I would rather not," "I am unworthy." If opportunities present themselves for doing good, let us make no excuse, but haste to the work and do it. TRY, TRY, and it shall be done.

' There is always a present reward for the thing done. The power is multiplied for the next effort, and then again for the next effort. It is first units, then tens, then hundreds, then thousands, and on—on to millions. Never, no, never say you cannot, when God speaks by His providence. A great man once said: "If God bids me make a world, I will try." Have faith in God Almighty. Preach as you never did. Go into the pulpit in Christ's name. Tell them your errand in the name of God without any faltering whatever. Be plain: fear not to warn, and to alarm, and by the terrors of the Lord to persuade men. Tell them of a Saviour. Go into the depths of the sea and behold a monster fish called a shark, but keep out

of its mouth, and ask counsel of it how to catch men, or go to Christ for a net. They are wise that win souls. Be determined on this great work. Go to Christ for a Pentecost of power.

‘Take care, wherever you are entertained on the Sabbath, that you never leave the house without prayer. I never do, and I have no recollection that I ever did. I generally pray twice with them. I am sorry so many local preachers neglect that duty.

‘After preaching, have a prayer-meeting. Do not ask any one if you shall have a prayer-meeting; the service is yours. Go to work manfully and in right good earnest. There may be some old conceited members who will say you are forward, and the people don’t like it. Never mind such slow coaches; ride over them if they will not stand out of the way. Go to work right heartily, and after a while you will grow right into it.

‘In prayer, put yourself in a right position. Let your head be up. Never, no, never kneel in that low-lived way with your head down upon your hands or on the rails. Kneel as if you had heaven and hell in front of you. Be ready to pray half a dozen times, if need be, and keep them alive by short singing and short prayers. Have your penitent form out, or get the sinners to the communion rail. If you say, “I cannot,” you will lose power. Go to work and do it. Make yourself do it. I observed that a great number of your professing men are women. How is it? But be you a man, *and play the man.* And if you fall down in the exercise of duty, be like a clever boy—get up again. Now take my advice. Give my kindest regards to your good wife, and a kiss to the little cherry.—
Yours truly,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘DONCASTER, May 29, 1876.

‘MY DEAR GIRL,—And so you are going to have a new Wesleyan chapel. I hope it will not be a silly, fashionable one; but beautiful, and plain, and useful; with a good pulpit platform, and communion all round. A church architect does not, or will not, understand useful, soul-converting Methodist chapels. Our chapels should be easy to speak in, without a

ringing noise, and the seats should be so nicely arranged that the whole congregation can be seen at once, and so that the preacher can see the colour of every face, and notice every blush and every falling tear. If an architect cannot build a chapel of the sort, I would send him home. He does not know how to build chapels for the Lord Jesus Christ.

‘Always keep full of work for Christ, and then you will not have much trouble with unbelief. Unbelief is the blue mould that grows on idle and lazy souls. Keep with duty, always working with Christ ; and then Jesus will take care that His bride walks with Him “in white.” Never belong to those who say, “I cannot,” “I am unworthy,” “I had rather not ;” but up and at it. Let it be always a settled thing in your own mind that you are unworthy, but don’t talk about it. Talking much about it is either canting pride or canting hypocrisy. Be a noble soul. You are unworthy, but your Jesus is worthy—and worthy of you. You are weak, but He is strong. Let Him be your Alpha and Omega—your all in all.

‘Work any way for Christ. If you take up a straw or a pin for Him, He will remember it, and tell you about it at another time before an assembled world. I am glad that you are stepping higher in your school, and that you have charge of a boys’ class. Girls by always shunning masculine duties become too feminine, till they have not a drop of manly blood in their veins, and become weak and finical. A truly Christian and intelligent female will be a true woman ; and if she has a dash of the masculine in her, she may become a noble character. I am glad you are growing in grace, and making yourself useful. Have faith in Christ’s blood ; have faith in the Holy Spirit ; have faith in God Almighty, and you will conquer everything between hell and heaven. Pray for me.—Believe me your affectionate friend,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad you remember the children when you are preaching, and seek their salvation. A small but beautiful present is before me—a silver pencil-case—from the elder boys and girls in a Sunday-school in the Howden Circuit, who are united and under the guidance of a Christian lady who

is their leader. I think the majority of the class will be girls. A considerable number of young people were saved, and I should think that scores of them are praying for me every day : “Lord, bless Mr. Marsden.” I have hundreds of children up and down the country praying for me. I have met with cases where I have been prayed for ten or fifteen years ; and even when they became men and women, they still continued to pray for me. And others on their death-bed have prayed, “Lord, bless Mr. Marsden.”

‘I am privileged above many by having the prayers of so many people. It is the fruit of a tree I planted upwards of forty years ago in taking notice of little folks. Many are now ministers, abroad and at home ; and others are in high social positions and well-to-do for both worlds, who took my advice when they were little children.

‘Many of my friends have laughed and made sport, and said queer things at my way of going down to the low and little folks, but it has been a great success. My tree has grown towards heaven, and its branches are spread over the nations among my spiritual children in Australia, America, and other places. May God bless you. Pray for me.—Yours affectionately,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘16, PRIORY PLACE, DONCASTER, December 31, 1878.

‘MY DEAR BROTHER,—May all the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ be your portion for the new year 1879. I hope you and your good wife and family are well. I am well, praise God for ever and ever. Amen.

‘I have had upwards of a thousand miles’ mission since October, and the Lord has saved some hundreds. Near Huddersfield in four days we gathered about one hundred and fifty. They slid down from the gallery like an avalanche from a mountain, filled the communion within and without, and vestry and other places. I seldom, if ever, saw such a wholesale giving way at once. And in South Wales and in Somersetshire I felt the almighty power of the Atonement. O how I have felt the glory of God ! Every night—Saturday too—and about three hours each night, and three times on

Sunday. I have had fifteen services a week for many weeks together. If this is not the way to get fat on good things, there is not another way in the world. O how my appetite was sharpened !

‘I say, my brother, it won’t do to be content with giving first-rate sermons without being endowed with power from on high. The world will give its applause and hurrahs, and foolish preachers may be pleased with the honour ; but it will go out like a falling star. Do you pray for me ? I have a special corner in my heart for you.—Believe me yours very affectionately,

I. MARSDEN.’

‘ALFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE, November 20, 1880.

‘I came here a week ago, and shall leave on Wednesday morning for Doncaster. The Lord is saving sinners. I have seen some thousands brought to Christ since I saw you. Since last September many in Cheshire, Leicestershire, Yorkshire, Durham, and Lincolnshire have been converted.

‘The Lord gives me wonderful strength of endurance. I think I feel as well and as strong as I have done for the past thirty years, and my voice has renewed its youth—yea, it is better now than it was forty years ago. I mean to sing “Hallelujah” for ever and ever. Amen.

‘O how precious I feel Jesus Christ to my soul ! I feel the cleansing blood every day. There is a great deal of talk about, “What is to be done to raise Methodism ?” My answer is : Only *one thing* for the pulpit and the pew. Not a splendid ritual, nor splendid chapels, nor splendid sermons, nor splendid concerts, nor splendid lectures, nor bazaars. *The Pentecost is that one thing* for pulpit and pew. All other things *without this* are splendid sins, and splendid professions, and splendid shams.

‘A person said on the Thanksgiving platform that we “were dying of respectability.” That statement was very good—just to the point.’

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLOSING SCENES.

DURING the latter part of the year 1881 Mr. Marsden's labours began to tell heavily upon him, and he showed signs of failing health. In preaching out of doors he would take cold, be laid up for several days, and before he recovered fully he would take cold again.

At his age, too, the long hours of excitement and hard toil, often perspiring profusely till ten o'clock in a crowded chapel, seriously affected his health. Sometimes he would be entertained by a friend at some distance from the chapel, and, in country places where cabs were not to be had, he walked home in the rain or snow, and thus caught cold again.

Sometimes, too, he lost his appetite entirely, and for days would eat nothing. If he had been at home and carefully nursed, there would have been some hope of his recovery. But he was often among strangers, who knew nothing of his peculiarities, and who had no idea how seriously his health was failing.

When he wrote home, his heart was so full of God's work that he seldom referred to his own needs. Those who read his letters very carefully would find perhaps one sentence that clearly indicated the mischief that was at work on his constitution. But if they were not thoughtful readers, they would imagine that all was well with him.

The following letter contains one such sentence : I have taken the liberty of underlining it.

‘BOROUGHBRIDGE, YORK, *Thursday, November 3, 1881.*

‘MY DEAR BROTHER,—I came here on Saturday. The Lord is with us mightily, saving sinners. I leave to-morrow for

Doncaster; then I have to preach, for they are having revival services. Then I am off to Barton-on-Humber, and after that I am engaged till Christmas.

‘About a month ago I went into Lincolnshire to one of the worst places. The Society was torn to pieces, and all very low. I wondered, before I went, why they had invited me. They told me the secret when I had done my work. O what a place! and what a state the Society was in! The great man of the place, a farmer, was the cause of all the trouble, I suppose. He never came near the services, though he was superintendent of the Sunday-school, and some of his friends kept away. Yet I knew nothing of all this. I felt it hard lifting, and yet I felt power in the lift, and power in my arm, and power in my tongue. The work was too great and the power too great for Satan. We got hold of the people, and we filled the chapel. *But my labour was so severe, and the distance to the house where I stayed was so great, and the weather so severe, that I was done up completely.* It has affected me ever since. I was doubly exhausted, but it was a triumph over evil.

‘I told them I wondered at them sending for me. The leaders and preachers had taken counsel together, and agreed that the Doncaster man would be the man for them. So one learns by the way that some things can be done by one man that cannot be done by another. God has different workmen, some to pull down the old world, and others to take the ruins and build up the new world. Hallelujah for ever and ever! Amen.—Yours truly,

I. MARSDEN.’

Still he struggled bravely on in spite of old age and infirmity and exhausting toil. He would keep his engagements as long as he was able.

The Rev. J. I. Britten spoke to him, and advised him to abandon his engagements in other circuits, and preach only occasionally in his own. He promised to take his advice, and shortly afterwards, feeling his weakness and utter prostration, he said: ‘It is all over, my work is done.’

The Rev. John Smith had some conversation with him about this time, in the course of which he said: ‘I have been instru-

mental in the salvation of hundreds, if not thousands, of souls, and I am thankful to God for it; but if that were my only hope of salvation, I should be damned. My hope of salvation depends on two things:—Jesus died for me—and I believe it.'

His brother, Mr. Joseph Marsden, had some conversation with him about his work. Mr. Joseph Marsden had been a local preacher many years, and he said to his brother: 'Don't you think that if you were to restrain yourself, and use milder expressions and less demonstrative methods, you would be more useful and acceptable.' His reply was: 'I would rather be Isaac Marsden with all his faults and all the souls the Lord has given him, than be some preachers who have never a soul to their ministry. I have worked hard. I am going to heaven, but not for what I have done. I am going empty-handed, trusting in the Atonement.'

For some time his friends hoped that he would rally again. His vigorous constitution and uniform good health led them to expect a longer lease of life. But there came symptoms of an obstruction of the intestinal canal, with nausea, vomiting, and sleeplessness. Various remedies were tried to remove the obstruction, but they were unavailing.

Writing on December 24th, 1881, he says:

'I gradually get worse and worse, and now I am very poorly. I have two to look after me—one a doctor, and the other more than a doctor—my beloved wife. O what nights of sickness and vomiting, and no rest nor desire for food! I am in such a state I shall have to give up some of my engagements—many, unless I improve.

'I am in the Lord's hands, and they are safe and right—infinitely right. Should a man complain who has had health nearly seventy-five years? No, no complaining after so much good health for such a length of time.

'O what a wicked thing to have given to the devil my younger part of it! But God is merciful, and on that mercy I stand.'

From this time he slowly but surely lost strength and gradually wasted away. He was unable to take food, and had

no desire for it. His medical advisers tried all their arts and exhausted all their resources ; but finding they could not save his life, they candidly told him so.

He accepted their verdict with perfect composure. He lay like a lamb. The strong man, whose turbulent spirit and iron will had carried all opposition before him, now lay as placid as a lake on a summer's day. He uttered no murmur. He breathed no complaint. He was not anxious to die, but perfectly submissive.

As long as he was able to read, he eagerly scanned the religious papers for tidings of the success of evangelistic work. The last paper he read was the *War Cry*—the organ of the Salvation Army.

When he was too feeble to read, he spent his time in prayer. Then he became so weak that he could scarcely speak, and finally he fell into a stupor and gently breathed his last about two o'clock on Tuesday morning, January 17th, 1882, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

He was interred at the Doncaster cemetery on Friday morning, January 20th.

The first part of the service took place in the Priory Place Chapel, the scene of his conversion, which was crowded to excess by his friends and admirers. The Rev M. Westcombe read the Psalms, and the Rev. J. C. W Gostick the Lesson. The choir sang the anthem : ‘ What are these arrayed in white robes ? ’

The Rev. J. I. Britten, the superintendent minister, then gave the following address :

‘ We have met this morning to pay the last mark of respect to our late brother. His remains lie before us, and we remember and respect even these as a grand shell which encased a noble kernel. That form, now prostrate and lifeless, has stood erect in its manliness in this pulpit, and in how many others all over the land I know not. ISAAC MARSDEN was born in the village of Skelmanthorpe, near Huddersfield, in June, 1807. The very stern discipline of the father was relieved and assuaged somewhat by the gentleness and piety of the mother. The religious decision of Brother Marsden is to be traced

chiefly to the prayers of his mother. As a boy, he was the subject of deep religious impressions, and had there been any one then to take him by the hand, as he told me during his illness, he would have been saved a terrible struggle and a reckless course. Perhaps it was a mistake, one often made by lads, that he did not make a confidant of his mother. Those boyish impressions were not consolidated, and he became a wild youth. He was the life of every party. He was the ringleader in every reckless frolic and village rout. He had no education, but was passionately fond of reading. He had next to no schooling, but he had a strong mind, and as strong a will. Read he would, read he did ; but Paine, Voltaire, and Mirabeau were his teachers, and Satan was his master.

‘So he went on from fourteen to six-and-twenty. He would do or dare anything. He feared neither God nor man. Soon after he obtained “the fear of God,” but never had the fear of man. He is now a man, full-grown, manly, independent ; strong frame, strong will ; full of infidel teaching ; fearless, godless, and reckless. As such, a year or two after this chapel was opened, he enters it. There is a special service, and the preacher is the Rev. R. Aitken. The fire of the preacher suits him. The earnestness of the preacher arrests him. The appeals of the preacher impress him ; let us rather say, the Holy Spirit strikes him, and, like Saul of Tarsus, he is staggered, knows not what to say or what to do. He goes into the schoolroom with other inquirers, but, to use his own words, he “said nothing and felt nothing ;” but he had made up his mind to abandon his course of life, and he acted accordingly and *immediately*. He went to his rooms at the “Wellington,” and told the landlady he was “going to turn over a new leaf.” She said she “should believe it when she saw it.” When she saw it, she said Isaac Marsden had “lost his senses.” Soon after, and when in this transition state, he stood up in a love-feast and said simply, “It will be a bad day for the devil when Isaac Marsden is converted,” and sat down. He went home and burnt his infidel books. Such decision was soon followed by acceptance, peace, and joy. He went to his old haunts and preached. He visited his old companions, and said he had

done with them, and warned them. Three of those companions came to sad and untimely ends. He travelled about with his cart from village to village and town to town, trading and preaching. He came on to the Doncaster Plan, rose to the top as the oldest local preacher, and never brought a shadow upon his profession.

'Isaac Marsden was a Boanerges. He was a Christianised Jupiter. Though not well educated, he was well read ; and, though lacking what is called culture, he was a living power. He was a God-sent man and a God-inspired messenger. He had his own work to do, kept to it, and never tried to do anything else. He was not a builder, but a demolisher ; with his Herculean strength and Herculean words he demolished the kingdom of Satan. He was a quarryman, fond of blasting, and gloried in bringing out the raw and rude and rough material. Others did the building, and polishing, and educating. "Every man in his own order." "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same Spirit." It is not the time or place to speak of defects. It was with Isaac Marsden as with all of us, "the treasure is in earthen vessels." As it is not the time to magnify his defects, neither would I minify his peculiarities. He often deplored them ; and, as time passed, moderated some views and mollified his expressions. But he was a grand man. Take him all in all, we shall not soon see his like again. He was Isaac Marsden—*sui generis*. What he was before his decision, he was after ; the same characteristics were simply brought under a new impulse and thrown in a new direction. For nearly fifty years he worked and preached. He loved soul-saving work. He was never so happy as when surrounded with sobbing penitents. He retained the fire to the end ; and when the natural force abated, this spiritual force never wavered. Like the war-horse, he sniffed the battle from afar. Like the old hunter, prostrate, powerless, the old spirit was there. On his deathbed he reviewed the old scenes and strengthened his faith by a remembrance of the old victories. May the Church always have such men ; and may the Holy Spirit find his successor in these services we are now holding ! As Isaac Marsden passes away in the midst of special services,

in the very place where he himself found Christ, so may during these very services some Isaac Marsden, upon whom his mantle shall fall, be “baptized for the dead” and given to the Church!

‘During the last six months our brother had been failing. A month ago he broke down completely. We prayed and hoped that he might be spared to give to the circuit the maturity of his experience and character and preaching, and to move about amongst our people. But it was the death-blow. With my colleagues I often visited him. It was a pleasure and profit to sit by his bedside. His patience was “lamb-like.” His resignation was complete. The strong will was merged in the Divine. The strong man lay still and placid as a child. He said one day: “I don’t feel anything or think anything of Isaac Marsden, it is all Christ!” On another occasion he said to me: “I have been looking back and reviewing seventy years, but I see nothing but the *Atonement!*—the Atonement at every turn!” He got weaker and weaker, and then could scarcely speak.

‘The day he died I saw him, and a few hours before his decease. For a time he seemed gone, his eyes were closed, and there was no response. I said to Mrs. Marsden: “I should like him to recognise me once more; you speak to him.” She said: “My dear, Mr. Britten is come to see and pray with you once more.” He paused, and then feebly said: “Bless him!” Taking advantage of the momentary consciousness, I bent down and said: “Brother Marsden, is Christ precious?” The lips moved, a smile gleamed, and he replied, with marked emphasis: “Very!” Again the mind was gone, and he was in a stupor. He died peacefully, painlessly, on Tuesday morning, January 17th, at two o’clock, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

‘He had occupied nearly all the positions of trust and honour his Church could give him. He was a steward, ex-circuit steward, local preacher, leader, and trustee. He was one of the few old trustees of this chapel. One of the last meetings he attended was for this chapel renovation, in which he took a lively interest. One of the last services he attended was on December 1st, the reopening of the chapel, when he met the President and Mr. Garrett, and said what a grand day

he had had ; and in the evening he attended the public meeting, and spoke briefly. The last contribution he gave was an *additional* one for the additional expense incurred by the renovation. He was a true Wesleyan, and a firm, constant, intelligent supporter of the various funds. He was liberal and generous ; tender-hearted and true. He was aided in his hospitality by his present widow, and the house was always open to a good man, and especially a preacher.

'And now we go from the house of God to the grave ; we follow not him, but his remains ; he is with the "innumerable company." It only remains for us to seek more of that devotedness he had. And now, in the presence of his lifeless form, and perhaps in the presence of his hovering spirit, if there is one not fully decided, may this hour of burial be the moment of resurrection of such soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness—the best service we could have for the deceased, and the most fitting memorial to his memory ! May God grant it ! Amen !'

The 50th hymn was then sung, and prayer offered by the Rev. J. Smith.

Some thousands of people followed to the grave and lined the streets *en route*. The service at the grave was read by the superintendent, and a most appropriate address to the people was given by the Rev. J. Felvus. The circuit stewards, the society stewards, the trustees, the local preachers and leaders followed in procession. We all turned from the grave feeling we had lost a most valuable worker, and that we must each work more devotedly, that there may be no lack.

Now that the grave has closed over our sainted brother, and time has given us a more distant view of him, we can see his parts in their true proportion and form a better estimate of his character and worth.

He was not the wild, reckless enthusiast that he was often painted. His opinions on social, political, and religious questions were always pronounced and advanced, but never wild or extreme. His plans and schemes were never Utopian and impracticable. He never asked others to do what he was not prepared to do himself, and he never suggested a scheme

that he was not prepared to carry to a successful issue. Making allowance for a red-hot shot or two poured into the camp of the enemy under exceptional circumstances, his speeches and opinions were singularly mild and moderate for a man of his character and temperament.

Religion with him was not a mere ‘craze.’ We all of us reckon among our acquaintances ‘men of one idea’ who have some particular hobby that they almost ride to death. In conversation and in our social pleasures we often find them terrible bores. No matter where the conversation begins, we always know where it is sure to end; and in their haste to mount their favourite hobbies they often step from the sublime to the ridiculous. These political and social and religious enthusiasts are day-dreamers whose schemes are Utopian and impracticable. And they go down to their graves disappointed, because they attempted what every moderate thoughtful man knew they had never any reasonable prospect of securing. Isaac Marsden was not an idle day-dreamer, formulating theories, and preparing plans, that could never be of the slightest use to the world. It is true he was often called ‘mad’ and pronounced ‘crazy;’ but men said of his Master, ‘He hath a devil, and is mad.’ So he counted it a great honour to be as his Master—reviled and persecuted and hated of men for the sake of the Gospel.

The strength of his character was his terrible earnestness. His iron will said: ‘I WILL SAVE MEN;’ and men and devils might put what barriers in his way they could or would, but nothing would divert him from his purpose. All his nets were made for catching men. All his lectures and speeches, on temperance, education, political and social questions, were so many spokes in a wheel whose centre was the cross of Christ. All the books he read, and all the subjects he studied, supplied him with powder and shot for winging and wounding impenitent sinners. He did not care how hard he hit them, or how terribly he frightened them, or how grievously he offended them, if only what he said stuck to them. And then he felt that they would be sure to come back again in tears of penitence, seeking mercy. And then he would receive them with exquisite tenderness and

affection, and lead them to the Saviour. In this way thousands of bad men have been

Deep wounded by the Spirit's sword,
And then by Gilead's balm restored.'

This terrible earnestness led him to denounce worldliness and formality in the Church, and apathy and indifference among the members. It did not matter to him whether the barriers to spiritual life and power were found in the public-house or the pulpit or the pew; with words of burning scathing power he would throw them down. He had not time for splitting hairs or making nice distinctions, and those who were smarting under his blows sometimes thought him unkind and unfair. But he answered these complaints by the retort that 'when you are in the midst of a life-and-death struggle, you must not be so careful where you set your feet as where you deliver your blows.'

The secret of his success was his spiritual power. The Holy Spirit accompanied his words, and made them mighty to the conviction and conversion of sinners. His prayers were answered so fully and frequently that he seemed to pray without ceasing, and hold special and privileged communion with heaven. As I write, I am reminded of Silas Told, John Nelson, Gideon Ouseley, and a host of other holy men, whose names and lives are the rich heritage of the Church. These holy men had the same power with God, and like success with men; and there was nothing in their lives beyond the reach of us.

We have a glorious heritage of spiritual life and power set before us, and Isaac Marsden's name is now added to the honoured roll of our sainted dead, who have left us noble examples in their lives and deeds.

Let us be 'not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'

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